

28. Northern Dorset Functional Area

28.1. Introduction

28.1.1. The 'A303 Corridor' economic area extends into Somerset and Wiltshire and includes the large built-up areas of Yeovil and Salisbury. In Dorset, it includes the towns of Gillingham, Shaftesbury, Sherborne, Stalbridge and Sturminster Newton and influences the housing market as well as the local economy. This is the Northern Dorset functional area.

Function and issues

28.1.2. The function of each of the main settlements is described in Figure 6.1 below, which also highlights some of the key issues in each of the towns. The three largest towns are Gillingham, Shaftesbury and Sherborne, which generally have a good range of services and some job opportunities. Stalbridge and Sturminster Newton are smaller towns with a more limited range of services. Issues include a low wage economy, an ageing population, a lack of affordable housing and in the case of Sherborne, commuting to and from Yeovil.

Figure 28.1 – The function and issues associated with the main settlements in the Northern Dorset Functional Area

Gillingham – The town of Gillingham has grown rapidly over the last 20 years and has a population of over 12,000. There are employment opportunities on four industrial estates and the town lies on the London to Exeter railway line and close to the A303. There is a limited retail offer in the town centre, which has about 70 shops, and the town's secondary school is at capacity.

Shaftesbury – The historic market town of Shaftesbury occupies a hilltop location and has a population of over 8,700. The town is a centre for the arts, culture and tourism and the town centre supports a good range of shops. There are some employment opportunities, including on two main industrial estates, and the town has a secondary school.

Sherborne - The historic market town of Sherborne has a population of over 9,900 and is located six miles east of Yeovil, which has a population of about 45,000. The town centre has a good range of shops and the town itself is a tourist destination. There are a number of private schools in the town (and a state secondary school), which are a major source of employment. High house prices in Sherborne result in a significant inward flow of mainly lower-paid workers with some, mainly higher-paid workers, commuting out to Yeovil and other destinations. Sherborne is on the London to Exeter railway line, which also serves nearby Yeovil.

Section 28: Northern Dorset Functional Area

Stalbridge – Stalbridge is the smallest town in Dorset with a population of just over 2,600. It has a large independent supermarket and a limited range of other shops. There are some local employment opportunities in the town at Station Road Business Park and at nearby at Gibbs Marsh Trading Estate and Henstridge Airfield.

Sturminster Newton – Sturminster Newton is a historic market town with a population of about 4,500. It has a small town centre with a range of shops, which has expanded in recent years through the redevelopment of the town's livestock market and creamery to provide a multipurpose community building (The Exchange) with an associated medical centre, supermarket, other shops and offices. The town has a secondary school and there are employment opportunities at the nearby North Dorset Business Park.

Environmental constraints

28.1.3. The functional area lies largely to the north of the Dorset AONB, although the Cranborne Chase and West Wiltshire Downs AONB lies close to the edge of Shaftesbury. Flooding is an issue in parts of Gillingham, Sherborne and Sturminster Newton. There are important heritage sites at Gillingham, Shaftesbury and Sherborne.

Figure 28.2 – Key environmental constraints in the Northern Dorset Functional Area

Gillingham – Flooding is an issue along the Rivers Stour and Lodden and Shreen Water, all of which pass through Gillingham. The archaeological site King's Court Palace lies to the east of the town.

Shaftesbury – The Cranborne Chase and West Wiltshire Downs AONB wraps around the northern, eastern and south-eastern edges of the town. Shaftesbury is a hill-top town with panoramic views over the Blackmore Vale, particularly from Castle Hill where there are several archaeological sites. Just to the south of the town is the Fontmell and Melbury Downs Special Area of Conservation (SAC).

Sherborne - The floodplain of the River Yeo runs along the southern edge of the town, with heritage assets, including Sherborne Castle and its park and gardens to the south-east.

Stalbridge – there are no key environmental constraints at Stalbridge however large parts of the town centre and countryside to the west of the town are designated as a conservation area.

Section 28: Northern Dorset Functional Area

Sturminster Newton – Sturminster Newton lies on a bend in the River Stour and consequently land to the east, south and west of the main part of the town is at risk of flooding. The scheduled monument of Sturminster Castle lies on the southern side of the river.

Northern Dorset functional area allocations

- 28.1.4. The spatial strategy for this area is set out in Policy DEV₄, which focuses the bulk of new development at the largest settlements of Gillingham and Sherborne, with smaller-scale expansion proposed at Shaftesbury, Stalbridge and Sturminster Newton. The proposed allocations for housing and employment use that contribute towards this spatial strategy are summarised in Figure 9.3.
- 28.1.5. The local plan includes separate chapters for each of the five towns. Each chapter sets out a vision for the relevant town, a town centre strategy and greater detail on development opportunities, including policies for each of the proposed allocations in Figure 9.3.
- 28.1.6. Within the Northern Dorset functional area, there is a need for additional care provision, ideally within the Gillingham / Shaftesbury area. The location of this should be within easy reach (ideally within 1km) of a town centre and GP surgery or community hospital. Care facilities in the form of a care village (as detailed in Section 4 of this plan) are needed to provide at least 145 extra care units, around 50 affordable homes for key workers, respite rooms and community space. There is also a need for a specialist unit to be provided for those with dementia.

NORD₁: Care Facilities within Northern Dorset

- I. Proposals for care hubs within the Gillingham / Shaftesbury area will be supported that meet identified needs and provide:
 - extra care units including affordable extra care units;
 - key worker affordable housing;
 - community space as well as communal areas; and
 - a nursing home for those with dementia.
- II. Proposals should be in an accessible location that has easy access to town centre facilities and a GP surgery or community hospital.

Section 28: Northern Dorset Functional Area

Figure 28.3 – Housing and Employment Land Allocations in the Northern Dorset Functional Area

Allocation	Total number of homes	With consent	Employment land (HA)	With consent
Towns and other main settlements				
GILL1 – Gillingham Station Road	200	0	--	--
GILL2 – Gillingham: Southern Extension	1,800	90	11.6	0.0
GILL3 – Gillingham: Land at Common Mead Lane	70	0	--	--
SHAF2 – Shaftesbury: South east of Wincombe Business Park	190	190	--	--
SHAF4 – Shaftesbury: South of the A30	--	--	6.6	0.0
SHER2 – Sherborne: Sherborne Hotel	119	119	--	--
SHER3 – Sherborne: Former Gasworks	50	0	--	--
SHER4 – Sherborne: Barton Farm Extension	470	0	--	--
SHER5 – Sherborne: N of Bradford Road	220	0	--	--
SHER6 – Sherborne: S of Bradford Road	490	0	5.0	0.0
STAL2 – Stalbridge: Land east of Thornhill Road	60	0	--	--
STAL3 – Stalbridge: south of Station Road	280	0	--	--
STAL4 - Stalbridge: N of Lower Road	120	120	--	--
STAL5 - Stalbridge: S of Lower Road	150	0	--	--
STAL6 - Stalbridge: Land Adjacent to the Sidings	--	--	0.7	0
STNW4– Sturminster Newton: North Dorset Business Park	--	--	2.9	0
Totals¹	4,239	519	26.8	0

¹ The totals do not include the optional area being considered at Gillingham.

Section 28: Northern Dorset Functional Area

Figure 9.4: Northern Dorset Functional Area Key Diagram showing local plan allocations.



Key Strategy map for the Northern Dorset Functional Area

<p>Functional Areas</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Northern Dorset Central Dorset Eastern Dorset 	<p>Settlement Hierarchy</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Tier 1 Tier 2 Tier 3 <p>Dorset Council Boundary</p>	<p>Broad locations for development</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Housing we are consulting on different levels of growth for these settlements Employment (Ha) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A Roads Rail/Stations Rivers Green Belt Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB)
--	---	---	---

29. Gillingham

29.1. Introduction

- 29.1.1. Gillingham is Dorset's most northerly town with a population of just over 12,000 people. The neighbouring Dorset town of Shaftesbury lies approximately 6km to the south-east, and the major trunk road the A303 lies 6km to the north. Although no 'A' roads run through Gillingham, the town is better connected than many by having a station on the London to Exeter railway line.
- 29.1.2. A key physical feature of the town is its location on the confluence of three rivers (Stour, Shreen and Loddon). Although these rivers are all relatively small at Gillingham, it does mean that the areas of land immediately adjacent to them are at higher flood risk.
- 29.1.3. The town includes several heritage assets, including the Grade I listed church of St Mary in the town centre and four conservation areas (Gillingham, Wyke, Colesbrook and Milton on Stour). There are also four scheduled monuments, including Kings Court Palace and the associated Park Pale. A new scheduled monument (remains of East Haines House) was designated early in 2020 on land near Bay.
- 29.1.4. The Gillingham Neighbourhood Plan (2016-2031), was 'made' (adopted) in July 2018 and contains a number of policies to influence development in the town however it does not contain any allocations for additional development.

29.2. Vision for Gillingham

- 29.2.1. Taking into account the detailed vision set out in the neighbourhood plan, in 2038 Gillingham will:
- Have a good range of shops, services and community facilities so that the town functions as a key/main service centre, meeting the needs of residents and a wide hinterland.
 - Have an enhanced town centre, by preserving the historic core (particularly the conservation area), regenerating the Station Road area, and improving links between the two areas.
 - Have improved transport connectivity and reduced congestion. There are pinch points in the road network which can be improved, but it is also important to make safe alternative routes for pedestrians and cyclists.

- Maintain employment opportunities – the town has a large employment base, and this needs to continue to ensure Gillingham doesn't become a dormitory town
- Deliver good quality green infrastructure – for the environment and for residents' quality of life. Schemes should help improve the network of green spaces, connect to the three rivers that run through the town, and help deliver the aspirations of the Gillingham Royal Forest project.
- Ensure housing is high quality so that it meets the needs of residents now and in the future.

29.3. Development strategy

- 29.3.1. Gillingham acts as a key service centre for a wide catchment area. It is also close to Shaftesbury and so the two towns complement each other in terms of the range of services they offer. For example, Shaftesbury has a community hospital while Gillingham has a railway station.
- 29.3.2. Gillingham has seen limited growth in recent years, with 139 net completions over the period 2009-2019. However, there are several significant development opportunities at the town including:
- An additional 1,800 homes as part of the planned southern extension. Outline planning permission has been submitted for the homes and it is hoped that first completions will begin in 2022;
 - Land at Barnaby Mead providing 50 new homes;
 - St Martins on Queen Street providing 55 extra-care homes;
 - The largest industrial estate is Brickfields Industrial Estate, which has around 11.5 ha of undeveloped land available for employment uses. Currently there are a wide range of employers in the town including Merck (chemicals and pharmaceuticals), Dextra (lighting products) and Neal's Yard (health and beauty products);
 - Opportunities for the regeneration of the Station Road area to provide enhanced town centre uses and around 200 additional homes;
 - In order to deliver housing to meet Gillingham's needs in the shorter term an additional site at Common Mead Lane is proposed;
 - A further longer term option north of Wavering Lane is being considered however there are concerns as to how this would impact on the existing planned growth of the town.
- 29.3.3. Gillingham's role as a key service centre will be enhanced through higher quality housing growth, the creation of a more diverse economy and the provision of a better range of services and community facilities. New development should be supported by

the necessary infrastructure and community facilities, to meet the overall needs of the expanded town and its hinterland, as well as the more local needs associated with each new development area.

29.4. Town centre strategy

- 29.4.1. Gillingham is the largest town in the Northern Dorset functional area. It therefore serves a wide hinterland of surrounding Dorset villages, plus villages in the neighbouring counties of Wiltshire and Somerset. However, its range of shops and services remain relatively limited. As the town grows, it is important that the vitality and viability of the town centre improves to ensure it remains attractive and to avoid the need for residents to travel further afield.
- 29.4.2. The town centre has several distinct parts – the historic core to the western end of the High Street, the main retail area of the High Street with a mix of traditional and more modern shop units and residential uses, the area bounded by Le Neubourg Way and the River Stour (where Waitrose and the Library are located), and the clustering of more modern large retail outlets around Station Road. At the north-east edge of the town centre is the education and leisure hub on Harding’s Lane. On the southern edge is the railway station / transport hub. The town centre boundary and retail frontages are shown on the policies map.
- 29.4.3. Given the future growth of the town, particularly at the southern extension, there is an estimated need for between 1,150–1,840 m² of new convenience goods floorspace and 1,102 m² new comparison goods floorspace in the town. In addition, the introduction of a street market to create more of a draw and improvement of the pedestrian routes to and through the town centre would help to add town centre vitality.
- 29.4.4. The town centre already has several supermarkets, with a Waitrose, a Lidl and an Asda. Additional convenience floorspace has recently been added through the recently opened Aldi supermarket at Kingsmead Business Park. Permission has recently been granted for a petrol filling station with ancillary convenience store also on Kingsmead Business Park. Although these are at the southern edge of town and will potentially cater for residents of the Gillingham southern extension, they are in addition to the local centre that is being specifically planned to support the urban extension. In this respect, the outline proposal includes provision for a new local centre to provide a mix of retail, community, health and leisure uses. This is likely to be opposite the new Aldi on the west side of Shaftesbury Road.

- 29.4.5. Additional comparison (non-food) floorspace can be met within the town centre area. Planning permission has been granted for the second phase of the Harwood Centre (between Station Road and Newbury) providing additional retail floorspace across six units. The former Co-op superstore on the High Street has been vacant since 2013 and could be brought back into use or redeveloped. As a large site in the centre of the town centre, this could be an ideal site to meet retail floorspace needs.
- 29.4.6. Le Neubourg Way, which allows most traffic to bypass the historic High Street, forms a barrier to the southern edge of the town centre. The Station Road area to the south of Le Neubourg Way does not provide a friendly environment for users of the station, being largely dominated by industrial and warehouse type buildings and having a poor public realm. This is one reason why there has been a longstanding ambition to regenerate the area, which would also provide an opportunity to expand the town centre offer and provide additional dwellings close to the town centre.
- 29.4.7. Numerous businesses operate in the Station Road area and they need to be successfully relocated before the area can be redeveloped. Support is therefore given to a mixed-use scheme to redevelop the area, subject to a detailed masterplan being agreed by Dorset Council. The masterplan would need to demonstrate that the proposed scheme will be fully integrated with and complementary to maintaining and enhancing the vitality and viability of the High Street. The area would eventually form part of the town centre and could include a range of uses such as shops, cinemas, restaurants and hotels. High density residential development is also compatible with a capacity for around 200 homes estimated. A key requirement is that any development helps deliver high quality public realm that provides a welcoming, accessible and safe entrance to the town centre for users of the station.
- 29.4.8. Dorset Council is currently implementing various changes to Station Road and Le Neubourg Way to help improve the routes for walkers and cyclists. These include the creation of cycle paths, advance stop areas for cyclists, and making part of Station Road one-way so that the pavements can be widened.
- 29.4.9. Some initial work is underway to establish the future commercial potential of sites in the Station Road Regeneration area. However, until land assembly in the area is possible, the delivery of this regeneration will remain a long term ambition for the town. For regeneration of the Station Road Area to be successful, individual schemes

need be compatible with the vision for the wider area. For this reason, a masterplan outlining how the area will change is needed.

GILL1: The Station Road regeneration area

- I. A mixed use scheme will be supported in the Station Road Regeneration Area, as shown on the policies map, incorporating town centre uses and, potentially an education facility. Additional housing could also be provided where this would help deliver the wider regeneration of the area.
- II. All developments will be expected to deliver improvements to the public realm and in particular facilitate the provision of an attractive route between the station and the town centre.

29.5. Main development opportunities

Gillingham Southern Extension

- 29.5.1. The Gillingham Southern Extension was originally allocated in the North Dorset Local Plan Part 1 (2016). The allocation included land for about 1,800 dwellings, as well as a local centre, an extension to Brickfields Business Park, a 'principal street' linking New Road (B3092) with Shaftesbury Road (B3081), 8.5 hectares of formal public open space and 26 hectares of informal public open space. As of September 2020, full permission has been given for 90 dwellings (land east of Lodden Lakes), and the principal street. Two outline applications totalling 1,595 dwellings have been provisionally approved subject to section 106 negotiations.
- 29.5.2. Affordable housing is required as part of the tenure mix on the southern extension. The policy requires 25% of the total number of homes to be provided as affordable homes however it is recognised that different phases may provide affordable housing at lower levels. It is expected that subsequent phases will be expected to make up the difference where viability permits.
- 29.5.3. The Gillingham Southern Extension policy (as revised) refers to a concept statement and a set of design principles (see Appendix 5). The proposals map identified allocations of land for housing growth (incorporating open space and landscaping), employment growth, and river corridors (informal open space). The map also showed the existing employment area at Kingsmead Business Park and indicated the approximate location of a local centre along Shaftesbury Road. A key requirement of the policy was that a comprehensive Master Plan Framework should be drawn up ahead of individual applications being determined. Although a masterplan has been

produced for the majority of the areas allocated for housing growth, it does not cover the full Southern Extension area.

- 29.5.4. The largest section of land in the Gillingham Southern Extension without planning consent is allocated for employment growth, and is on the southern edge of Brickfields Business Park. There may be a need for the council to take a lead in bringing this land forward for development, potentially including actions such as the production of a masterplan for the area.

GILL2: Gillingham Southern Extension

- I. Development on land, as shown on the policies map, allocated for the Gillingham Southern Extension will provide (amongst other things):
 - approximately 1,800 dwellings (including affordable housing);
 - 12.5 ha for economic development;
 - a new 'local centre';
 - a 'principal street' linking New Road (B3092) and Shaftesbury Road (B3081);
 - at least 8.5 ha of formal public open space; and
 - at least 26 ha of informal public open space.
- II. Planning applications on or affecting the southern extension should:
 - reflect the concept statement and design principles for the site;
 - conform with the parameters of the latest masterplan agreed with the council, unless departure can be clearly justified; and
 - demonstrate how the land use allocations, infrastructure and other requirements set out in this policy; on the proposals map for the strategic site allocation; and in the other policies of the Local Plan will be provided and delivered.

Environment

- III. Development of the southern extension should conserve and enhance the natural and historic environment by:
 - integrating into the wider landscape, particularly where the edge of development adjoins open countryside; and

- conserving and enhancing wildlife interests, including both habitats and species within and close to the site and specifically along the river corridors; and
- retaining and enhancing significant archaeological features and their settings, including Kings Court Palace Scheduled Monument and Gillingham Park Boundary Bank Scheduled Monument.

Meeting Housing Needs

IV. Housing development in the southern extension should:

- be phased over the Plan period; and
- be phased spatially based on the approach that development will commence adjacent to the existing built-up area of the town and spread out towards the boundaries of the site; and
- provide a mix of market and affordable homes with 25% of overall number of homes being delivered as affordable homes;
- make provision for at least 50 affordable extra care units for the elderly, as part of the overall provision of affordable housing.

Supporting Economic Development

V. Economic development in the southern extension will be provided for on:

- land to the south of Brickfields Business Park; and
- the remaining undeveloped land at Kingsmead Business Park.

Grey Infrastructure

VI. Development in the southern extension should provide for the following:

- a 'principal street' linking New Road (B3092) and Shaftesbury Road (B3081), which will be designed as a bus route; and
- a permeable and legible network of well-defined streets and spaces which are cycle and pedestrian friendly, including well-designed gateways to the town and accesses to different areas of development at key points. Links from the southern extension into the existing built-up area of the town should be primarily for pedestrians and cycles; and
- the closure of Cole Street Lane to vehicular through traffic, other than for access; and

- off-site highway improvements, particularly improvements to increase the capacity of the New Road (B3092) and Shaftesbury Road (B3081) junction; and improvements in the Shaftesbury Road/Le Neubourg Way corridor; and
- off-site measures, and contributions towards off-site measures, to support the use of public transport, cycling and walking. Such improvements will include the enhancement of Gillingham Railway Station and the completion, where practicable of gaps in existing cycle and pedestrian route networks between the town and the southern extension; and
- contributions towards the provision of a link road between the B3081 and the A30 at Enmore Green; and
- other grey infrastructure requirements to support the development of the southern extension including the upgrading of foul sewers; the town's sewage treatment works; utilities; and telecommunications networks, including broadband.

Social Infrastructure

- VII. Development in the southern extension should provide for the following:
- a local centre near to the Shaftesbury Road corridor to serve the southern extension, which will include small scale convenience retail; a 2 forms of entry primary school; a pre-school nursery; a community hall; health facilities (including a doctors' surgery, a dentist and a dispensing pharmacy); and other essential local facilities; and
 - the expansion of St Mary the Virgin Primary School including the provision of land if required; and contributions towards the expansion of Gillingham High School; and
 - contributions towards improvements to, or the expansion of Riversmeet (including a community hall); the town's Library and Fire Station.

Green Infrastructure

- VIII. Development in the southern extension should provide for the following:
- at least 8.5 hectares of formal public open space, including sports pitches, children's play spaces, allotments and community orchards. At least 7 hectares should be provided as sports pitches and associated facilities. The preferred option is for sports pitches to be grouped in two clusters either side of the B3081; and

- at least 26 hectares of informal public open space primarily along the river corridors providing a landscape setting for development; enhanced habitats for wildlife; and off-road routes for pedestrians and cyclists both within the site and linking to the town and countryside; and
- the retention, where practicable, of important trees, groups of trees and hedgerows within public open spaces and publically accessible 'greenways'; and
- the establishment of a sustainable drainage system across the southern extension utilising, where practicable, existing watercourses, ponds, ditches and the 'greenways' associated with the retained hedgerows; and
- the retention of existing areas of strategic landscape planting and the establishment of new strategic landscape planting, particularly on the edges of the site to screen new development whilst also allowing views out of and into the site; and
- contributions towards the provision or enhancement of green infrastructure off site.

29.5.5. It should be noted that the Waste Plan 2019 requires land for a new Household Waste Recycling Centre to serve Gillingham and Shaftesbury. Therefore 1 ha of land at Brickfields is reserved for such a use, plus a further 0.5 ha for a waste vehicle depot.

Land at Common Mead Lane (proposed allocation)

- 29.5.6. In order to fulfil a shorter-term need for housing, land to the rear of Mellows Nursing Home, Common Mead Lane is proposed for residential development. The site could deliver around 70 dwellings reflecting the character of the nearby residential areas. With appropriate design and landscaping, development on this site would have minimal adverse impact on the surrounding landscape.
- 29.5.7. Specific design considerations will include the Wyke conservation area to the north which is approximately 180 metres away. Vehicular access could be achieved onto Common Mead Lane to the east of the Nursing Home.
- 29.5.8. The area is identified in the Gillingham Neighbourhood Plan as an area of search for new green space provision. This accords with the public rights of way crossing through the site which will need to be incorporated into any design. Development of the area

should therefore help to deliver the aspirations of the neighbourhood plan and helping to facilitate improved public access to the countryside.

GILL3: Land at Common Mead Lane

- I. Land at Common Mead Lane, as shown on the policies map, is allocated for residential-led development.
- II. Access should be from Common Mead Lane.
- III. Landscaping will be required as part of the scheme to minimise the visual impact of the development on its surroundings. Tree planting should be provided along the northern edge to screen views from the Wyke conservation area.
- IV. Formal public open space and play facilities should be provided on site.
- V. Existing rights of way should be incorporated into the layout of the development and opportunities to deliver allotments or sports pitches should be considered.

Optional urban extension

29.5.9. Land west of Peacemarsh offers a further opportunity to deliver residential development at Gillingham. The area has the capacity to deliver around 600 new homes. This could meet longer term housing needs of the town and deliver further infrastructure improvements at the town. Further cemetery, sports pitch and allotments could for example be delivered as part of the development along with increased schools capacity.

29.5.10. However, there are concerns about the delivery rate of housing in Gillingham with a significant number of new homes already planned for the town. Development of this location would therefore need to be phased so as not to inhibit but to complement the delivery of the southern extension and other sites around the town. This phasing may well push the site back to beyond the end of the plan period.

29.5.11. If the site were to be allocated, it would need to accord with the following:

- The site would need to be phased so as to not impact on the certainty of developments already planned for the town. These sites have already been planned with a considerable amount of private and public investment.
- A range of house types and tenures would need to be provided including affordable homes and extra care facilities.
- Suitable highways access points would be necessary including access from Wavering Lane and additional connections to the B3092 where possible. Additional cycle and walking connections would be necessary between the development site, the town centre and adjacent residential areas, along with enhancements to the

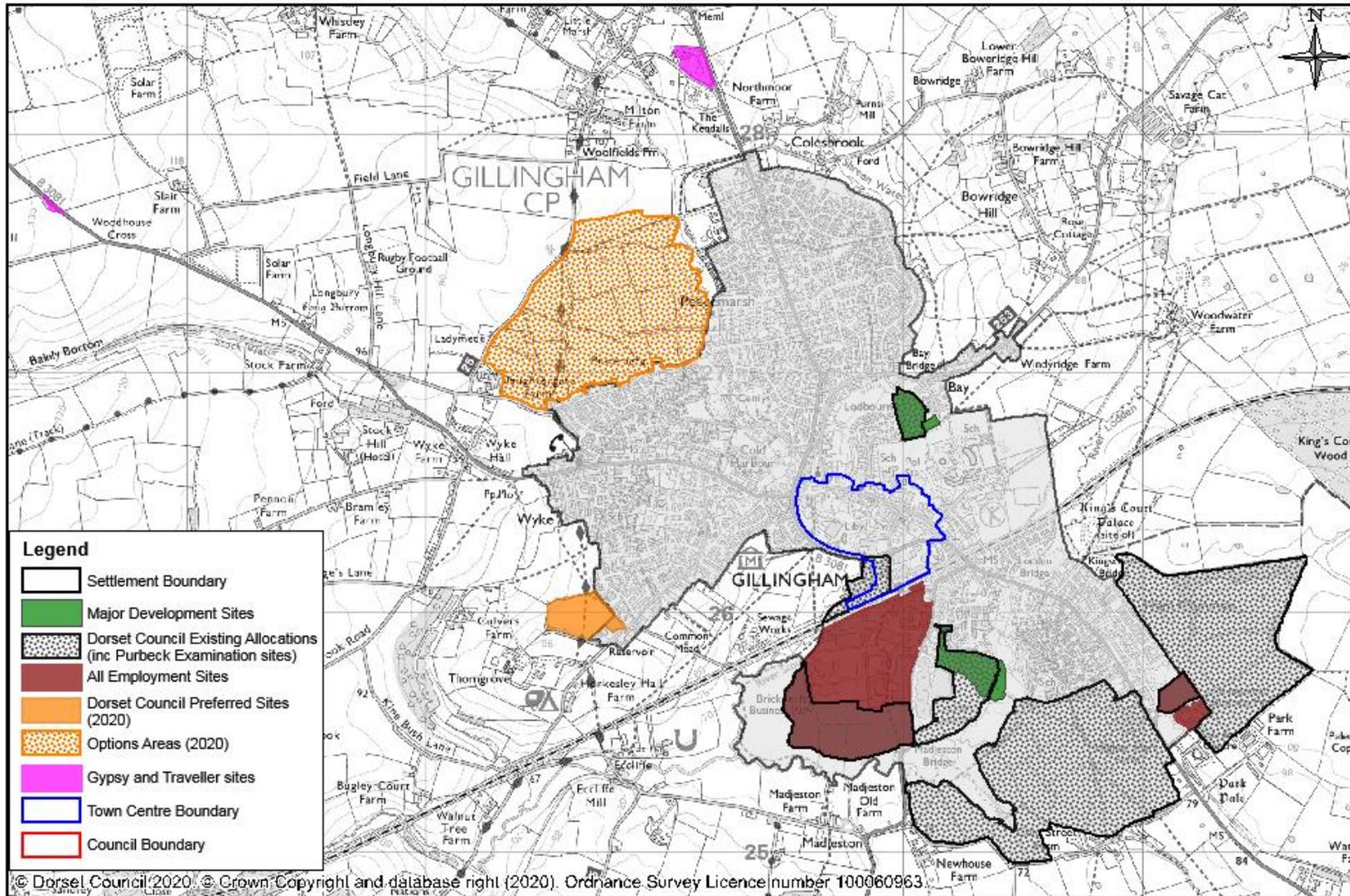
Stour Valley Way. A permeable and legible network of streets and spaces would need to be articulated through a site-wide masterplan that captures clearly what would make the development an attractive and pedestrian and cycle friendly area.

- Mitigation of any impact on the conservation areas at Wyke and at Milton on Stour would need to be articulated through the masterplan and subsequently delivered.
- Adequate school provision would be necessary including the provision of a primary school and additional capacity at secondary level.
- Appropriate levels of multifunctional green infrastructure would need to be provided including formal and informal open space, playing pitches, areas for biodiversity, the retention and strengthening of existing tree planting and hedgerows and the management of flood risk.

Q: Gillingham

1. Do you agree with the suggested approach and what it is trying to achieve?
2. What about the suggested policy wording?
3. Could any amendments improve the policy or its strategy?

Figure 29.1: Map of proposed development sites at Gillingham



30. Shaftesbury

30.1. Introduction

- 30.1.1. Shaftesbury, along with Gillingham, provides services and facilities that serve residents who live in the northern part of Dorset and parts of Wiltshire immediately east of the town. Its current population is estimated to be approximately 8,800. The historic core of the town occupies a hilltop location. The views that this affords, along with its attractive town centre built largely from local green sandstone, makes it a popular tourist destination. The town has no rivers or railway lines, but does sit at the crossroads of the A350 and the A30 routes.
- 30.1.2. The hilltop location of the town creates a unique set of constraints. There are steep 'slopes' to the south, west and north of the town centre, and further development in these directions would either be impracticable, harmful to valuable landscape views or harmful to the heritage of the town. There are also areas protected for their biodiversity value (SSSI and SNCI) on these 'slopes'.
- 30.1.3. As well as landscape value, the town also has a considerable number of heritage assets. These include 275 listed buildings, with the remains of Shaftesbury Abbey and the Park Wall having Grade I status. There are also six scheduled monuments, which include Castle Hill. A large proportion of the town has conservation area status including most of the town centre plus Enmore Green to the north and St James to the south.
- 30.1.4. The town council has prepared and submitted a neighbourhood plan which is now awaiting referendum. The plan includes policies relating to the town centre, housing and employment, green infrastructure and other developments but it does not include any new allocations for additional development.

30.2. Vision for Shaftesbury

- 30.2.1. Reflecting the vision for Shaftesbury in the neighbourhood plan in 2038 Shaftesbury will:
- Have a range of shops, services and community facilities so that the town functions as a key service centre, meeting the needs of current and future residents;
 - Retain and enhance its distinctive natural and historic character;
 - Maintain and improve local employment opportunities;

- Have an improved network of green infrastructure – particularly linking the town’s slopes with the wider landscape.
- Improve linkages with Gillingham including through the provision of a new link road from the B3081 to the A30 at Enmore Green.
- Have improved and safe pedestrian and cyclist routes around the town.

30.3. Development strategy

- 30.3.1. Shaftesbury acts as a key service centre for a wide catchment area. It also complements Gillingham, with the range of services they offer. Improving the linkages between the two towns will therefore have benefits for both.
- 30.3.2. Shaftesbury has grown considerably in recent years with around 900 net additional dwelling completions over the last period.
- 30.3.3. 2009-2019. Most new development has been on land to the eastern side where the land forms a plateau. There are now limited opportunities left without having significant impacts on the town’s character. These opportunities include:
- A small amount of land to the east of the town, south of Wincombe Lane which remains undeveloped;
 - Land at Littledown, where construction started in 2020;
 - Land south-east of Wincombe Business Park and Land off Higher Blandford Road, both of which have planning consent;
 - The town’s industrial areas, including Longmead Industrial Estate, Wincombe Business Park, Littledown Business Park, and the BV Dairy site, have limited additional capacity. In order to provide further employment opportunities approximately 7.0 hectares of land south of the A30 has been allocated for employment purposes.
- 30.3.4. Further to the north and east is the county boundary with Wiltshire and beyond it the Cranborne Chase and West Wiltshire Downs AONB. Shaftesbury will therefore continue with a moderate level of development through the sites outlined above. In addition, opportunities for brownfield redevelopment may arise during the plan period.
- 30.3.5. The Government has recently announced funding to explore the feasibility of a north – south transport route between the Dorset coast and the M4. Whilst this is being evaluated, the land reserved for the eastern bypass corridor will be protected. However, the delivery of the Enmore Green link route will be delivered to ease transport pressure on key junctions in the town and in support of the development at Gillingham.

30.4. Town centre strategy

- 30.4.1. Although Shaftesbury is smaller than the neighbouring town of Gillingham, its town centre provides a complementary role. In particular, it plays a much greater role in terms of tourism as its hilltop position offers wide views across the Blackmore Vale and is home to Gold Hill, made famous by the 1970s Hovis TV advert. The town is also a cultural destination as it has an Arts Centre and hosts an annual performing arts festival (Shaftesbury Fringe). Overall, the town centre appears to be popular and has a below average vacancy rate.
- 30.4.2. The town centre is relatively compact and is based principally around Bell Street and High Street. It has a historic feel, comprised of narrow streets and green sandstone buildings. On the eastern edge of the town centre is a Tesco supermarket. To the east of Tesco is the former Cattle Market site, fronting Christy's Lane which has been identified as an opportunity for mixed-use regeneration. A Lidl supermarket is proposed on the majority of the site leaving a small area for further development.
- 30.4.3. A town centre boundary, primary shopping area, and retail frontages have been identified and are shown on the policies map.
- 30.4.4. Given the recent proposal for a Lidl supermarket, there is little need for additional convenience floorspace in the town however there is a need for an estimated 1,730 m² of comparison goods and other leisure uses floorspace.
- 30.4.5. There are few options to make up the requirement for comparison goods floorspace in the town centre. However, the former Co-op supermarket could be used for this purpose along with the remaining portion of the Cattle Market site. There could be other potential infill opportunities in the town centre that may emerge with time, although the conservation area status and the large number of listed buildings will act as a significant constraint in many locations.
- 30.4.6. Despite Shaftesbury's importance as a tourist/visitor destination, there is a poor choice of leisure services (including cafes and restaurants). Therefore, opportunities to improve this provision will generally be supported, following the town centre sequential approach.

- 30.4.7. The narrow network of medieval streets do not lend themselves to heavy traffic and therefore measures to encourage walking and cycling in the town will be supported as will the provision of appropriate cycle parking facilities. This accords with an aim of the neighbourhood plan which sets out a network of pedestrian and cycle routes across the town.

SHAF1: Land at Christy's Lane

- I. The former Cattle Market area fronting Christy's Lane, as shown on the policies map, will be reserved for development that meets the description of 'main town centre uses'.
- II. The design of development on this site should help lift the street scene on Christy's Lane and provide an attractive entrance to the town centre from the east for example through the use of traditional local building materials and design that takes inspiration from local architecture.

30.5. Main development opportunities

South-east of Wincombe Business Park

- 30.5.1. Land to the south-east of Wincombe Business Park is allocated for residential development and has capacity to deliver around 190 new homes. The main access to this area should be from Wincombe Lane. Due to the proximity of the AONB to the eastern boundary of the site, a comprehensive landscaping plan will need to be delivered to minimise the impact of the development on the sensitive landscape.

SHAF2: South-east of Wincombe Business Park

- I. Land to the south-east of Wincombe Business Park, as shown on the policies map, is allocated for housing.
- II. Access to the development site should be via Wincombe Lane
- III. Development of the site should incorporate strategic landscaping within the site boundaries to minimise impact on the nearby AONB.

- 30.5.2. Over recent years, much of the development in Shaftesbury has been to the east of Christy's Lane. There is now a need for some additional community facilities to be provided to help serve this new area of the town. Over recent years, there has been a fluctuating need for a new primary school due to changes in the demographic profile of the town. In addition, a community meeting space and a doctors' surgery (or

expansion of the existing building) would be beneficial and Section 106 contributions have been secured to help deliver a community hall in the town.

- 30.5.3. There is an undeveloped portion of land south of Wincombe Lane within the former allocated development area which would be suitable to deliver some of these community uses.

SHAF3: Land south of Wincombe Lane, Shaftesbury

- I. Land south of Wincombe Lane, as shown on the policies map, is allocated for community infrastructure provision and could include a new primary school, a community hall or GP surgery.

Employment land at Shaftesbury

- 30.5.4. The existing industrial estates and business parks at Shaftesbury are fully developed with the only opportunities being to intensify or redevelop within these boundaries in accordance with policies ECON₁ and ECON₂. An area of land of approximately 6.6 hectares to the south of the A30 is allocated for employment uses as shown on the policies map. Although part of the site is occupied by some businesses, little other development has taken place on the site to date. The site is however considered an important site for future employment development for Shaftesbury and the wider area.

SHAF4: Land South of the A30

- I. Land south of the A30, as shown on the policies map, will be developed for employment purposes

- 30.5.5. Land to the north of the Blackmore Vale Dairy site on Wincombe Lane has been identified as a development opportunity to meet the needs of the Blackmore Vale Dairy. The Blackmore Vale Dairy appears to be a growing business which has expanded on its current site a number of times in recent years. However, the land shown on the policies map is not considered to be suitable for general purpose employment due to the potential for impact on the AONB to the north-east, the proposed residential development to the north-west, and the public footpath crossing east-west between the existing dairy and the proposed site.

SHAF5: Land north of the Blackmore Vale Dairy

Land at the Blackmore Vale Dairy site, as shown on the policies map, is reserved for the expansion of the existing dairy business. Any development will need to address:

- the impact of noise and odour on nearby existing and future residents;
- traffic movements on Wincombe Lane;
- the visual impact (in particular, on the nearby AONB);
- the impact on the rights of way network.

Land reserved for the Shaftesbury outer eastern bypass

30.5.6. Previous plans for the Shaftesbury area have proposed and reserved a route for an eastern bypass for Shaftesbury. There is local support for this scheme at Shaftesbury as it may help reduce the volume of traffic passing through the town, particularly on Christy's Lane.

30.5.7. Currently the only potential source of funding for the Shaftesbury eastern bypass would be as part of a wider package to improve road connectivity between the Dorset coast and the M4 and this is something Highways England is exploring as part of a strategic study announced in the Road Investment Strategy, published March 2020.

SHAF6: Land to the east of Shaftesbury

Land for the A350 eastern bypass corridor will be safeguarded from any development proposals which would prejudice the future implementation of the proposed bypass. This safeguarding will be reviewed every five years to ensure it is still appropriate.

30.5.8. Proposed growth at Gillingham will increase traffic flows on the B3081 between the town and Shaftesbury. The tight bend at the junction with the Motcombe Road limits the overall capacity of the whole route between the two towns. For this reason a new link between the B3081 and the A30 at Enmore Green is proposed. When built this will make it easier for traffic from Gillingham to gain access to the A30 and should improve road safety and amenity at the Shaftesbury end of the B3081.

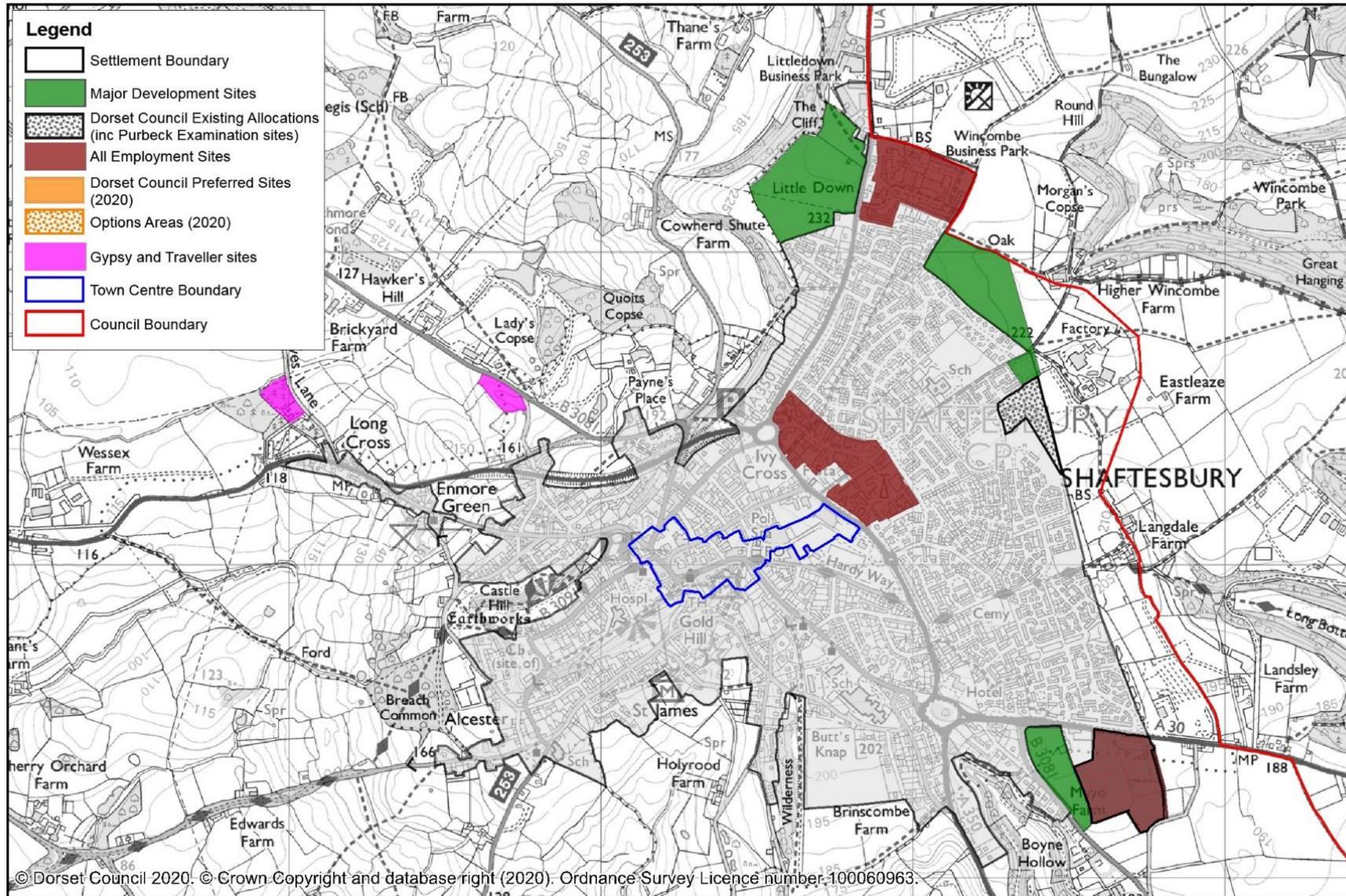
SHAF7: Enmore Green Link Road

A link road will be constructed between the B3081 and the A30 to reduce the impact of traffic travelling between Gillingham and Shaftesbury.

Q: Shaftesbury

1. Do you agree with the suggested approach and what it is trying to achieve?
2. What about the suggested policy wording?
3. Could any amendments improve the policy or its strategy?

Figure 30.1: Map of development at Shaftesbury



31. Sherborne

31.1. Introduction

- 31.1.1. The historic market town of Sherborne, with a population of around 9,900, has a wide range of facilities including a large number of small specialist and independent businesses.
- 31.1.2. Sherborne has strong links with Yeovil (in South Somerset) to the west and Wincanton (also in South Somerset) to the north, but also has good connections with Dorchester to the south and Sturminster Newton and Shaftesbury to the east. The town also plays host to a number of private schools which are significant local employers.

31.2. Vision for Sherborne

- 31.2.1. In 2038 Sherborne will:
- be a place where the outstanding historic and cultural character of the town and its landscape setting are conserved and enhanced;
 - have a thriving arts and cultural offer;
 - use the historic interest, arts and cultural activities as a basis for tourism, with the town becoming a key inland visitor destination;
 - have a better balance of housing and jobs;
 - have improved accessibility to public transport with enhanced traffic management;
 - be a place where residents of all ages are given the opportunity to use a wide range of community facilities;
 - continue to benefit from the nationally and internationally important educational establishments in the town;
 - support high quality design in the built environment; and
 - continue to maintain a physical and visual separation from Yeovil.

31.3. Development strategy

- 31.3.1. Although Sherborne is not within the AONB like a number of the other towns in Dorset, the high number of heritage assets in the town including Sherborne Castle and Sherborne Abbey and the surrounding topography, restrict development opportunities. In addition, the town and surrounding countryside are all within the hydrological catchment of the Somerset Levels Ramsar Site, a wetland of

international importance. Water quality at this site is being adversely affected by increased levels of phosphates in waste water arising from new developments within the catchment. Developments within the catchment would therefore need to demonstrate that they are phosphate neutral.

31.3.2. Existing allocated sites in Sherborne include the following:

- Land at Barton Farm – the continued development of the site currently under construction for housing, employment (as a key employment site) and community uses;
- Land at Sherborne Hotel – as an important gateway site to the town. The site now benefits from planning permission for a 24 bedroom hotel and 119 extra care units;
- Former gasworks site, Gas House Hill – the site is a brownfield site well located close to the town centre and railway station. It has not been developed for a number of reasons linked to viability and access. Some of the remediation work is now complete and a mixed use development is considered the most feasible solution to redeveloping this brownfield site.

31.3.3. The longer term growth of Sherborne will be delivered through development focused to the west of the town. Three areas are allocated for development, delivering housing and employment land. These areas will be master planned together to coordinate their delivery. The areas will deliver highway improvements and are likely to continue to be developed beyond the end of the plan period.

- Further land at Barton Farm - to the northwest of the current Barton Farm site delivering a link between the A30 and the B3148 Marston Road.
- Land North of Bradford Road – between the A30 and Bradford Road, enabling a new access route off of the A30 to deliver an alternative route to The Abbey Primary School and onto Bradford Road
- Land South of Bradford Road – to deliver additional homes, primary school provision and employment land with direct access onto the A30 through the North of Bradford Road development. Access to The Abbey Primary School through this site would relieve some traffic pressure on Lenthay Road.

31.4. Town centre strategy

31.4.1. Sherborne town centre is an accessible centre with good bus, rail and road links. The town centre has a good provision of retail and financial services, with low levels of retail vacancies. The town benefits from a high concentration of independent non-food retailers which make up the vast majority of town centre trading adding to the diversity, vitality and viability of the centre as a whole. There is however a below

average provision of leisure uses (including cafes and restaurants) within the town centre.

- 31.4.2. The town has a good convenience provision with larger shops including Waitrose and Sainsbury's, supported by other smaller grocers, delicatessens and bakers. There are also several markets which provide additional diversity including the Sherborne Vintage Market and Sherborne Farmers' Market which are both held at regular intervals each month.
- 31.4.3. The centre of Sherborne is classified as a 'Town Centre' within the retail hierarchy. Sherborne's primary shopping area is located in the centre of the town and is concentrated mainly along Cheap Street with a small amount extending into Half Moon Street, Long Street, Newland and The Green. The primary shopping frontages include all of Cheap Street with the secondary frontages including Half Moon Street, Longstreet and The Green. These town centre boundaries are shown on the policies map.
- 31.4.4. The retail capacity assessment identified a need for 1,245 m² net of new comparison goods floorspace in the town by 2036. There was however limited need identified for additional convenience floorspace with a requirement for only 55 m² net by 2036.
- 31.4.5. Overall the historic nature of the town centre provides a good, well maintained environmental quality. However, there is a lack of public open space and seating within the centre which if improved could attract more people to the area.
- 31.4.6. The historic character of the town is a significant asset, however it does also restrict large scale development opportunities. Within the town centre there are a number of opportunities for enhancement through the redevelopment of redundant or underutilised sites. The redevelopment of the former tennis courts as a new arts centre with access off the Old Market Place (to the rear of Cheap Street) is one example which currently benefits from planning consent.
- 31.4.7. Although large scale opportunities for town centre development are limited, the car park areas to the rear of Cheap Street are the most suitable location for the future expansion of the town centre. The provision of public car parking close to the town centre is also important to its continuing success, and therefore any development will need to take this into account. Opportunities for reconfiguring car parking in Sherborne to allow for the town centre to expand will be supported.
- 31.4.8. Due to the significance of the heritage assets within the town centre any proposals for development will need to be sensitively designed to minimise impact. Where possible,

development proposals should look to enhance the public appreciation of heritage assets within the centre.

- 31.4.9. Any development should be well-integrated with the existing primary shopping area with adequate connections to Cheap Street.

SHER1: Future town centre expansion

- I. Land at Newland Car Park North and Newland Car Park South, as shown on the policies map, is the most suitable site for future expansion of the town centre area.
- II. Any development proposals for the site should offer improved linkages to the existing primary shopping frontage and will need to retain the existing level of public car parking.
- III. Development of the site should result on an overall enhancement of the historic core of Sherborne.
- IV. Once developed, the area will form part of the primary shopping area of the town.
- V. Increased accessibility into the town centre including additional footpaths and access points, will be supported to promote walking and cycling into the town centre.
- VI. Opportunities to reconfigure car parking within the town centre without detracting from the historic nature of the town will be supported to allow for the continued success of the town centre.

31.5. Main development opportunities

Land at Sherborne Hotel

31.5.1. This site was previously allocated in the 2006 and 2015 Local Plans for employment uses including the retention of a hotel on the site. The hotel is considered to be important locally in sustaining tourism and accommodating visitors to the local schools and businesses. This is relevant to the town vision of becoming a key inland visitor destination. The site was granted planning permission in November 2017 for a 24 bed hotel and 119 unit Extra Care facility.

31.5.2. The development of the site will require improvements to the existing vehicular access with Horsecastles Lane to improve highway safety. In addition pedestrian and cycle paths links from the site to the A30 Yeovil Road and the existing network of cycle and foot paths will be required.

- 31.5.3. The site is visually prominent in the street scene and therefore any development will need to be designed to a high standard to reflect the gateway status of this location.

SHER2: Land at Sherborne Hotel

- I. Land at Sherborne Hotel, as shown on the policies map, is a key gateway site allocated for the retention and or expansion of the hotel and other appropriate business uses.
- I. The development will include pedestrian and cycle links to facilitate ease of access to existing services and amenities
- II. The development should be designed sympathetically to take into account the close proximity of the site to the Sherborne Conservation Area and its location at a 'gateway' to the town.
- III. The development will retain the existing mature trees and hedgerows and include additional tree/shrub planting to prevent overlooking into the existing properties on the southern boundary of the site and to soften the northern boundary to the A30.

Former gasworks site, Gas House Hill

- 31.5.4. The former gas works site is a brownfield site well located close to the town centre and railway station, however further connectivity for pedestrians and cyclists would be beneficial.
- 31.5.5. Although remediation work has been undertaken to address on-site contamination issues the site has not been developed for a number of reasons primarily linked to viability. A flexible allocation for both housing and employment should provide greater scope to allow this site to be redeveloped effectively and reduce the potential impact on the amenity of the existing homes on Gas House Hill.
- 31.5.6. The access arrangements will need to be improved, as the current arrangements are narrow and partially within the flood plain. The site slopes steeply down from New Road, and has a thick boundary of mature trees to the north, west and south which should be retained to minimise impact on wider views. There may be structural problems with the retaining wall along the southern boundary which would need to be resolved.

- 31.5.7. The site is relatively close to the important heritage assets of Sherborne Castle and associated park and garden and the Sherborne Conservation Area. The development of the site will need to be designed to minimise impact on these heritage assets and include appropriate screening to achieve this.

SHER3: The former gasworks site, Gas House Hill

- I. The Former Gasworks Site, as shown on the policies map, is allocated for development.
- II. The development will include pedestrian and cycle access to link the site to existing services and amenities.
- III. The development of the site will need to minimise impact on nearby heritage assets including Sherborne Castle, park and garden and Sherborne Conservation Area.
- IV. A landscape strategy will be required to minimise impact on wider landscape views.
- V. To mitigate potential flood risks, only the area outside the flood risk zone at the former Gasworks on Gas House Hill, is allocated for housing and employment.

Development to the west of Sherborne

- 31.5.8. The future long term growth needs of Sherborne will be met through the development of three areas to the west of the town. These sites will be master planned to enable the coordinated development of the three sites and the delivery of new homes, employment land and infrastructure for the town.
- 31.5.9. As part of the development, new junctions and road linkages will be necessary to serve the development areas and to help relieve traffic congestion on the existing road network. Further school provision will be necessary including expanded primary provision at Sherborne Abbey Primary School and further provision at the Gryphon School.

Barton Farm Extension (proposed allocation)

- 31.5.10. The existing development site at Barton Farm will be extended to the north and west. The development of this site will deliver around 470 new homes with the primary access achieved directly from the A30 via the road installed for the existing Barton Farm site. The site will form part of the wider development area to the west of Sherborne with the area being master planned to coordinate development and to offer enhanced benefits for the town.

- 31.5.11. As part of the development of this site, a road will be required linking the A30 to the B3148 Marston Road. This route will relieve traffic at the junction of Marston Road with the A30 at Newell. This link route should be developed to function as the priority route for traffic travelling along Marston Road. Further junction improvements may be necessary at Newell once the link route has been developed.
- 31.5.12. The site rises to higher ground towards its northern limits. To minimise the impact on local landscape, the higher ground will need to incorporate landscaping and be sensitively designed. In this area, building heights should be lower and further tree planting could help to minimise landscape impact. The development will create a new entrance to Sherborne for traffic travelling from the west and therefore will need to be designed with this in mind.
- 31.5.13. Due to the sloping nature of the site, there is the potential for significant surface water runoff which will require mitigation. As the existing storm water drainage in this part of the town is already stretched at times of heavy rainfall, significant attenuation of surface water flows from the site will be necessary as part of a viable and deliverable drainage strategy.
- 31.5.14. The site is also partly within the Mineral Safeguarding Area and the prior extraction of sand and gravel may be required.

SHER₄: Barton Farm Extension

- I. Land north and west of Barton Farm, as shown on the policies map, is allocated for residential development.
- II. The development of the site will deliver a new road linking the A30 with the B3148 Marston Road as part of the built form. Further junction improvements at the Marston Road junction with the A30 at Newell may also be necessary.
- III. To enable ease of access to the town centre and other facilities, pedestrian and cycle links to the town are required. The scheme should be designed to provide a positive frontage along the new link road and the existing Marston Road.
- IV. Development will need to include sufficient landscaping to reduce impact on views from the south including retention of existing mature trees and hedgerows.
- V. Impact on important heritage assets within the town will also need to be given careful consideration. This includes the impact on the setting of Sherborne Castle and associated park and garden.
- VI. The development of the site should be in accordance with a master plan covering this site and the two other allocated sites to the west of Sherborne.

Land north of Bradford Road (proposed allocation)

- 31.5.15. Land to the north of Bradford Road will be developed to provide about 240 new homes for the town. A new junction on the A30 will be necessary to serve the development with the route connecting through the development to Bradford Road. With the provision of a new access onto the A30, the junction onto the A30 via Low's Hill Lane will be closed to remove a highway safety issue.
- 31.5.16. Currently, the junction of Bradford Road and Horsecastles Lane can be problematic at peak times. Provision of the new access onto the A30 will help to alleviate this, however, there may be a need for further improvements to this junction as a result of any additional traffic that may use Bradford Road.
- 31.5.17. The site will form part of the wider development area to the west of Sherborne with the area being master planned to coordinate development and to offer enhanced benefits for the town.
- 31.5.18. The development site is adjacent to a number of existing residential properties and would therefore need to be sympathetically designed to lessen impacts on the current residents. In addition, the site's location adjacent to the A30 will require careful

treatment to ensure that the amenity of future residents is not adversely affected by traffic travelling along the A30.

- 31.5.19. The site will be required to provide pedestrian and cycle links to the town centre and other facilities to improve the connectivity of the site by means other than by car and to aid in its integration within the town.
- 31.5.20. Due to its prominent location on the main route into the town, the design of the development on this approach will require careful treatment. Enhanced tree screening along the northern edge of the site will help to minimise impact.
- 31.5.21. The site is partly within the Mineral Safeguarding Area and the prior extraction of sand and gravel may be required.

SHER5: Land north of Bradford Road

- I. Land north of Bradford Road, as shown on the policies map is allocated for residential development.
- II. The development will be served via a new junction on the A30 with a connection made through the development and to Bradford Road. The junction of Low's Hill Lane and the A30 will be closed. Further improvements at the junction of Bradford Road and Horsecastles Lane may also be necessary.
- III. To enable ease of access to the town centre and other facilities, pedestrian and cycle links to the town are required.
- IV. The development will need to be sympathetically designed to limit impacts on existing residents adjacent to the site and take into account the proximity of the site to the A30. A landscape buffer along the A30 should be provided.
- V. The development of the site should be in accordance with a master plan covering this site and the two other allocated sites to the west of Sherborne.

Land south of Bradford Road (proposed allocation)

- 31.5.22. Land south of Bradford Road will be developed to provide around 490 new homes and at least 5 Ha of employment land. The main point of access for the site will be via the development to the north of Bradford Road giving direct access to the A30. A road will be provided through the development connecting to Lenthay Road as an alternative access to Sherborne Abbey Primary School.
- 31.5.23. As employment uses are often within larger buildings, the new employment land to be provided as part of the development of this site will be in the north western corner within the screening provided by the existing mature tree belt. This location also gives an opportunity for vehicles serving the new employment area to access directly onto

the A30 via the new junction, thus minimising the impact on existing and new dwellings. Further pedestrian and cycle links to the town centre and other facilities will also be required.

- 31.5.24. To facilitate the growth of Sherborne, an additional 1.5 to 2 forms of entry at primary school level will be necessary. This will be provided through the expansion of Sherborne Abbey Primary School within or adjacent to the site boundary.
- 31.5.25. The development site is, in its south west edge, adjacent to Lenthay Common. The interaction between the development site and Lenthay Common will need to be carefully treated. This area may be more appropriate for the provision of open space associated with the development or for a significant buffer to be provided. An alternative approach maybe to relocate the existing allotments in the south east corner of the site to the edge adjacent to Lenthay Common.
- 31.5.26. The impact on the existing properties on the eastern edge of the site will need careful consideration as will the relationship with Sherborne Abbey Primary School and Lenthay Dairy Farm. Proposals should retain the existing hedgerows and mature tree screen within the site to maximise opportunities for biodiversity enhancement and to break up the development form within the landscape.
- 31.5.27. The site is also partly within the Mineral Safeguarding Area and the prior extraction of sand and gravel may be required.

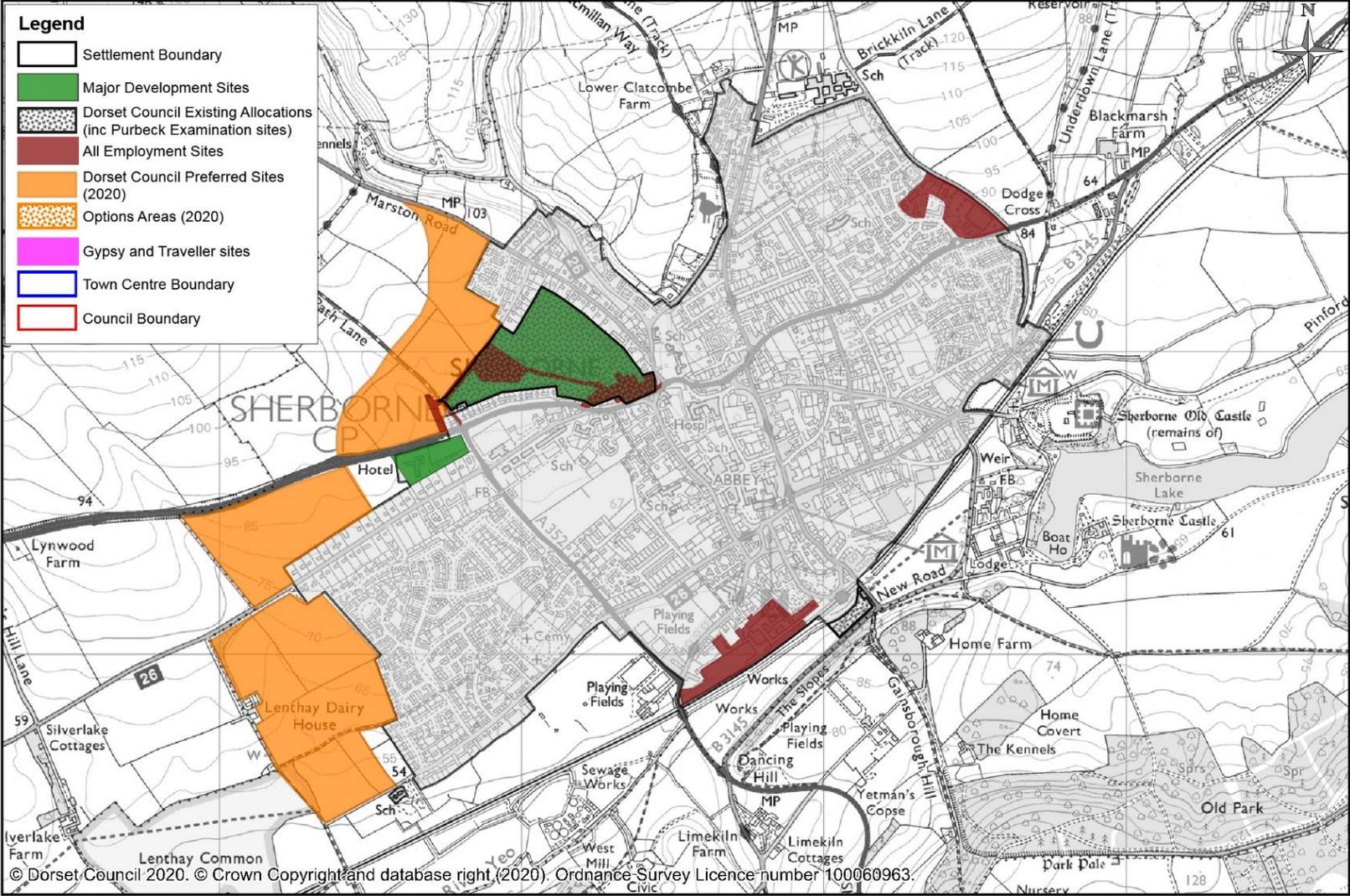
SHER6: Land south of Bradford Road (preferred option)

- I. Land south of Bradford Road, as shown on the policies map is allocated for residential and employment development delivering at least 5 hectares of employment land.
- II. The employment land provision will be within the existing mature tree belt in the north west of the site. The relationship between this employment land and Lenthay Dairy Farm will need careful treatment.
- III. The development will be served primarily via the new junction with the A30, proposed to be delivered as part of the development of the land north of Bradford Road. A link will also be provided between Bradford Road and Lenthay Lane to reduce traffic issues at Sherborne Abbey Primary School. In addition, pedestrian and cycle links to the town's centre and other facilities will be necessary.
- IV. The expansion of Sherborne Abbey Primary School will be required as part of the development of the site.
- V. The relationship between Lenthay Common and the development site will need to be sensitively designed through the provision of a buffer to the Common boundary or the relocation of the existing allotments adjacent to the Common boundary.
- VI. Development will need to be sympathetically designed to limit impacts on existing residents adjacent to the site. Existing trees and hedgerows should be retained within the development.
- VII. The development of the site should be in accordance with a master plan covering this site and the two other allocated sites to the west of Sherborne.

Q: Sherborne

- 1: Do you agree with the suggested approach and what it is trying to achieve?
2. What about the suggested policy wording?
3. Could any amendments improve the policy or its strategy?

Figure 31.1: Map of development at Sherborne



32. Stalbridge

32.1. Introduction

- 32.1.1. Stalbridge has a population of around 3,500 people and is located close to the boundary between Dorset Council and South Somerset District Council. Over a third of Stalbridge's population are aged over 65 years, which is higher than the average for Dorset.
- 32.1.2. Stalbridge provides a range of services and facilities for its residents including a primary school, an independent supermarket and a limited range of other shops. The Stalbridge area also offers employment through businesses located on the Station Road Business Park and nearby Gibbs Marsh Trading Estate and Henstridge Airfield (in Somerset). Most households have access to a car which reflects its rural location where reliance on the car is prevalent. Stalbridge has a strong functional relationship with both Marnhull and Sturminster Newton, for example it falls within the catchment for Sturminster Newton High School. Stalbridge is also close to the Henstridge and Templecombe. Templecombe railway station is on the main line with services to London Waterloo and Exeter.
- 32.1.3. A large proportion of the settlement is designated as the Stalbridge Conservation Area and there are also clusters of listed buildings around the town centre. The path of a former railway line – parts of which now form the North Dorset Trailway – skirts the eastern edges of Stalbridge.

32.2. Vision for Stalbridge

- 32.2.1. In 2038 Stalbridge will:
- retain its attractive historic character and continue to respect the character of the surrounding countryside, whilst delivering new homes to meet housing needs; and
 - improve accessibility between shops, services and new homes, whilst acting as a local service centre in conjunction with neighbouring settlements.

32.3. Development strategy

- 32.3.1. Stalbridge functions well as a small rural settlement. Residential development, primarily to the east and south-east of the settlement, presents an opportunity to sustain existing shops and local services, contribute to meeting the area's housing

requirements by providing affordable and market homes, and attract younger families to the town.

32.3.2. Opportunities for development around Stalbridge include:

- The existing consented site to the east of Thornhill Road;
- Land to the south of Station Road;
- Land to the north of Lower Road;
- Land to the south of Lower Road; and
- Land adjacent to The Sidings as an employment site.

32.4. Town centre strategy

- 32.4.1. Stalbridge has a modest number of small independent shops and some service providers. This collection of shops are anchored by Dike & Son, an independent supermarket and café on Ring Street. Those small independent shops in the town top-up the shopping needs of local residents. These businesses are concentrated in a shopping area that starts at Ring Street and extends along High Street up to the junction with Duck Lane in the north.
- 32.4.2. Stalbridge acts as a 'District Centre' within the hierarchy of centres. It is anticipated that there is a limited need for new retail floor space in Stalbridge over the plan period with a projected need for around 50 m² of convenience goods floor space and around 120 m² of comparison goods floor space
- 32.4.3. The historic character of the conservation area and the density and pattern of existing development mean there are limited opportunities for additional retail development within the town centre. This lack of availability coupled with the uncertainty associated with the future projected need for retail floorspace lead to a situation where it is considered unnecessary to allocate additional space for retail expansion in the town. Any additional need could be addressed through take up of vacant units, the extension of existing units, infill development and/or potential change of use applications.
- 32.4.4. Due to the fragility of the retail offer in Stalbridge, additional retail provision away from the centre has the potential to have a significant impact on the existing units. For this reason, development outside the town centre, as identified on the policies map, will be resisted.

STAL1: Town centre development

- I. Proposals for additional town centre use floorspace should be focused within the town centre boundary as identified on the policies map.
- II. Development proposals for town centre uses outside of the town centre will be resisted.

32.5. Main development opportunities

Land to the east of Thornhill Road

- 32.5.1. Land to the east of Thornhill Road has planning permission for 60 homes. The site extends around the southern edge of Stalbridge positioned between Thornhill Road in the west and Lower Road in the east.

STAL2: Land to the east of Thornhill Road

- I. Land to the east of Thornhill Road, as shown on the policies map, is allocated for residential development.
- II. The development of this site should offer improved pedestrian and cycle links from Thornhill road onto Lower Road and towards the centre of Stalbridge.

Land to the south of Station Road (proposed allocation)

- 32.5.2. The area south of Station Road, as shown on the policies map, is considered suitable to deliver new homes at Stalbridge helping to sustain the long-term vibrancy of the town. The site extends from Station Road to the disused railway line in the south and has capacity for around 280 new homes. Part of the site is the subject of a recent undetermined outline planning application.
- 32.5.3. Part of the site is positioned close to the eastern edge of Stalbridge and Station Road Business Park along with vacant land to the south of The Sidings which is retained as a site for future employment development. Due to the potential for conflict in relation to noise and odour between the new residential area and the existing employment uses, it is essential that the residential development is designed with appropriate buffers and other mitigation as necessary. The development of this site should not prevent the continued operation of the Business Park.
- 32.5.4. There is also potential for contamination on site because of its association with the former railway line and an industrial works (small gas works) formerly located to the north west of the site. Site investigations will be required to determine the nature and extent of the risks from contamination, and to inform any remediation measures.

- 32.5.5. The south-western edge of the site is positioned directly adjacent to a Site of Nature Conservation Interest (SNCI) and the site is located around 4 kilometres to the north of Rooksmoor Special Area of Conservation (SAC). Nitrogen emissions from vehicle movements connected with the development along the A357 / A3030 have the potential to have significant effects on the SAC and will require mitigation. Adverse effects on the integrity of the site could potentially be mitigated by reducing vehicle trips on the roads running through the SAC by encouraging people to travel on foot and cycle along an extended section of the North Dorset Trailway (linking Stalbridge to Sturminster Newton). The council would seek financial contributions to part fund works along this section of Trailway, and further section to the north-west running towards Henstridge and Templecombe. As this site is located adjacent to the disused railway, opportunities exist to facilitate direct improvements to its extension and these should form part of any development proposal.
- 32.5.6. The effects of development on the adjacent SNCI will also need to be assessed. The council expects development to deliver net gains in biodiversity. As part of this the development should have a positive impact on the adjacent SNCI and deliver net gains for biodiversity in the area more generally.
- 32.5.7. To support the use of sustainable transport the development should contribute toward improved footpath and cycle links between the site and Stalbridge's centre. In addition, some of the road junctions in Stalbridge pose road safety concerns particularly around the junction of Station Road, Barrow Hill and the A357. Where necessary the council will seek contributions to fund improvements to the existing junctions.
- 32.5.8. Part of the site is at risk from surface water flooding (approximately half a hectare) and an ordinary water course runs along parts of the eastern and western edges of the site. This water course also crosses the site, and appears to drain towards an area of lower lying land to the south-east of the site. Flood risk should be avoided by not locating new homes on the parts of the site which are susceptible to surface water flooding. The development should include an appropriately designed sustainable drainage system to manage surface water runoff and to ensure that development does not increase the risks from flooding elsewhere. It may be necessary to conduct offsite investigations of the ordinary watercourse and low lying land to the south-east when designing the drainage system for the site.
- 32.5.9. The site comprises open undeveloped fields that extend up to the edge of Station Road and the eastern edge of the settlement. Hedgerows and trees growing around the edges of the site positively contribute to the landscape character of the

surrounding area, providing a rural setting for Stalbridge. To conserve landscape character and Stalbridge's rural setting, development should retain existing trees and hedgerows and the scale of development should be limited to avoid intrusion into the skyline.

- 32.5.10. To provide sufficient capacity in local schools, day nurseries and institutions supporting children with Special Educational Needs and Disability (SEND) the development should contribute towards funding the costs of a new primary school as well as contributions towards increased capacity at other tiers of the school system.

STAL₃: Land to the south of Station Road

- I. Land south of Station Road, as shown on the policies map, is allocated for residential development;
- II. Development of the site:
 - should be designed to integrate with the existing built areas and the development north of Lower Road and reflect local character;
 - must not adversely affect the integrity of Rooksmoor Special Area of Conservation (SAC);
 - should have a positive impact on the adjacent Site of Nature Conservation Interest and deliver a net gain to biodiversity in the area;
 - provide safe and attractive pedestrian routes to link the development site with the North Dorset Trailway and the centre of Stalbridge;
 - improve linkages between existing green infrastructure. Specific opportunities important to this site include improvements to and the extension of the North Dorset Trailway and links with nearby development sites; minimise any potential conflict between the residential uses proposed and the existing and future uses on Station Road Business Park; and
 - contribute towards funding the costs of a new primary school at Stalbridge, as well as contributions to education provision at higher tiers.
 - minimise any potential conflict between the residential uses proposed and the existing and future uses on Station Road Business Park; and
 - contribute towards funding the costs of a new primary school at Stalbridge, as well as contributions to education provision at higher tiers.

Land to the north of Lower Road

32.5.11. Land to the north of Lower Road has planning permission for 120 homes. The site extends around the south eastern edge of Stalbridge between the former railway line and Lower Road. The northern side of the site is positioned adjacent to the SNCI.

STAL4: Land to the north of Lower Road

- I. Land to the north of Lower Road, as shown on the policies map, is allocated for residential development.
- II. Development of the site will need to improve access onto the North Dorset Trailway and deliver a positive impact on the adjacent Site of Nature Conservation Interest.

Land to the south of Lower Road (proposed allocation)

32.5.12. Land to the south of Lower Road, as shown on the policies map, is also considered appropriate for residential development and has capacity to deliver around 150 new homes. The northern edge of the site follows the edge of Lower Road which forms the southern boundary to the 'Land north of Lower Road' development site.

32.5.13. The edges of the site are enclosed by mature hedgerows and a footpath runs along the site's western edge, along an unmade road. An ordinary watercourse runs across the south-eastern edge of the site between Lower Road and the footpath, and the land around the edges of the watercourse is affected by surface water flooding.

32.5.14. The site is located around 4 kilometres to the north of Rooksmoor Special Area of Conservation (SAC). Nitrogen emissions from vehicle movements connected with the development along the A357 / A3030 have the potential to have significant effects on the SAC and will require mitigation. Adverse effects on the integrity of the site could potentially be mitigated by reducing vehicle trips on the roads running through the SAC by encouraging people to travel on foot and cycle along an extended section of the North Dorset Trailway (linking Stalbridge to Sturminster Newton). The council would seek financial contributions to part fund works along this section of Trailway, and further section to the north-west running towards Henstridge and Templecombe.

32.5.15. Some of the road junctions in Stalbridge pose road safety concerns particularly around the junction of Station Road, Barrow Hill and the A357. Where necessary the council will seek contributions to fund improvements to the existing junctions. To support the use of sustainable transport the development should also contribute towards providing a footpath / cycleway along the southern side of Lower Road to the junction with Bibberne Row to offer a safe link between the site and Stalbridge's centre.

- 32.5.16. An ordinary watercourse runs to the south-east of the site's boundaries, and the land around this watercourse is at risk from surface water flooding. The development should include an appropriately designed sustainable drainage system to manage surface water runoff and to ensure that development does not increase the risks from flooding elsewhere. It may be necessary to conduct offsite investigations of the ordinary watercourse and low-lying land to the south-east when designing the drainage system for the site.
- 32.5.17. To provide sufficient capacity in local schools, day nurseries and institutions supporting children with Special Educational Needs and Disability (SEND) the development should contribute towards funding the costs of a new primary school as well as contributions towards increased capacity at other tiers of the school system. The site contributes towards the open rural character of the countryside which surrounds this southern side of Stalbridge. The undeveloped skylines and relatively far-reaching views provide a rural setting for the village. To conserve landscape character and Stalbridge's rural setting, development should retain existing trees and hedgerows and the scale of development should be limited to avoid intrusion into the skyline. Areas of open green space should be provided within the development site and the development should provide physical links between existing green infrastructure.

STAL5: Land to the south of Lower Road

- I. Land to the south of Lower Road, as shown on the policies map, is allocated for residential development.
- II. Development of the site:
 - should be designed to integrate with the existing built-up area of Stalbridge including the new development to the west of the site;
 - must not adversely affect the integrity of Rooksmoor Special Area of Conservation (SAC);
 - should provide a safe and attractive pedestrian route to link the development site with Stalbridge town centre; and
 - should contribute towards funding the costs of a new primary school at Stalbridge, as well as contributions to education provision at higher tiers.

Land adjacent to The Sidings

32.5.18. Land adjacent to The Sidings and Station Road Business Park has been allocated for employment uses through previous local plans. Although it has not been developed to date, the additional residential growth proposed within the town should be balanced by some additional employment opportunities. Development of this site will complement existing neighbouring uses potentially in the form of smaller start-up units or for larger uses.

32.5.19. Due to the site's proximity to the proposed housing allocation at Station Road, employment proposals on the site will need to be compatible with the neighbouring future dwellings. Development of the site will need therefore to be designed with this future development in mind.

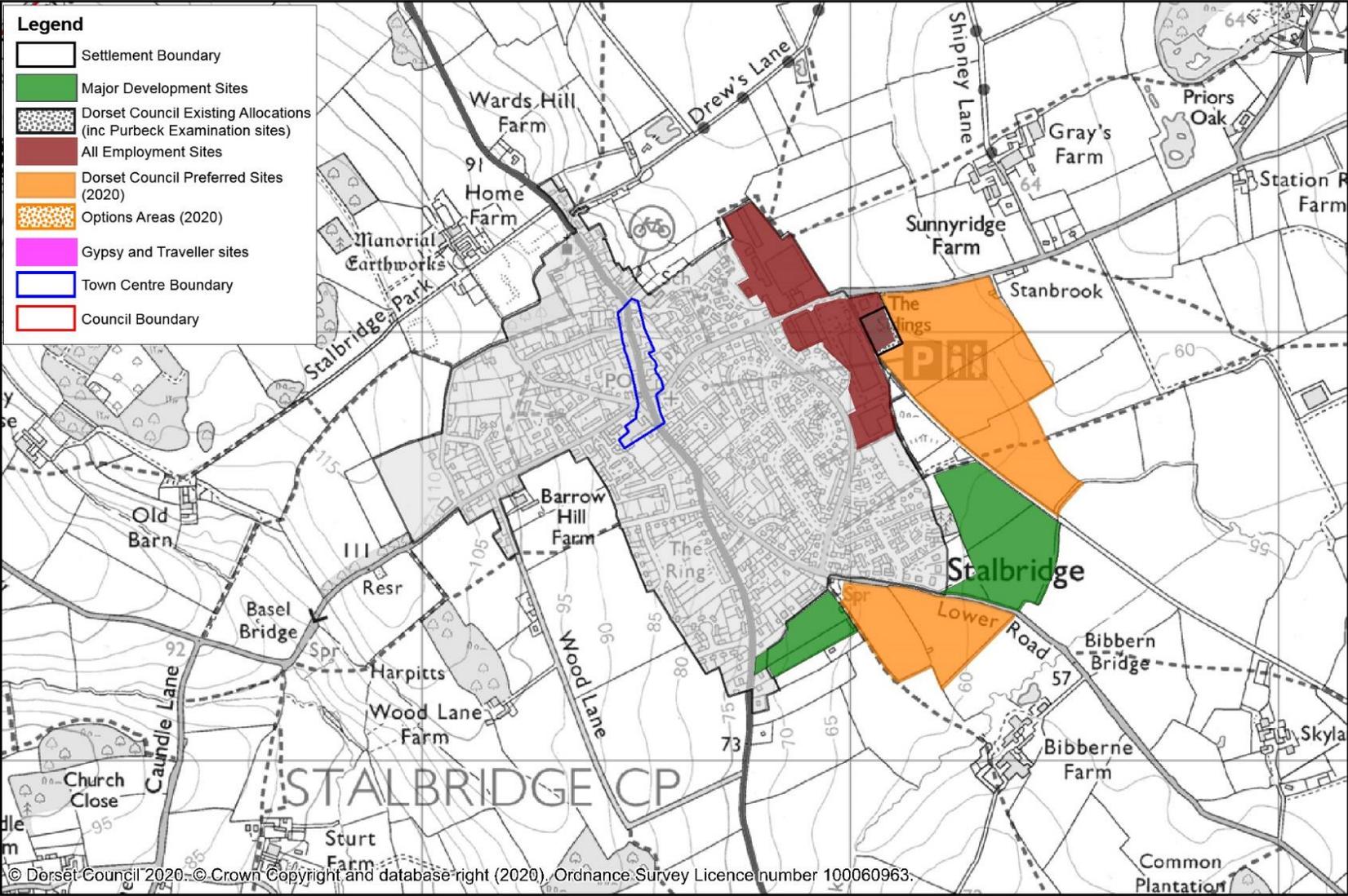
STAL6: Land adjacent to The Sidings

- I. Land adjacent to The Sidings, as shown on the policies map, is allocated as a key employment site.
 - Development of the site will be restricted to those uses that are capable of being located adjacent to the (proposed) residential site without harming the amenity of future residents.
 - Development should be sensitively designed having regard to the proposed housing allocation to the east and south of the site.

Q: Stalbridge

- 1: Do you agree with the suggested approach and what it is trying to achieve?
- 2: What about the suggested policy wording?
- 3: Could any amendments improve the policy or its strategy?

Figure 32.1: Map of development at Stalbridge



33. Sturminster Newton

33.1. Introduction

- 33.1.1. Sturminster Newton has a population of around 4,500 and is located to the north-west of Blandford. 'Sturminster', which includes most of the town's homes, shops and businesses, lies to the north of the River Stour, whilst the smaller 'Newton' to the south has grown up around the historic Sturminster Mill. The two parts of the town are separated by the river flood plain with Sturminster being almost encircled by the River Stour and its tributaries.
- 33.1.2. The Sturminster Newton Neighbourhood Plan (2016–2031) was made in January 2019. The neighbourhood plan sets out strategies for meeting the town's development needs (including further homes and employment land) and sustaining and enhancing the local economy whilst conserving and enhancing its historic character and natural environment.
- 33.1.3. Sturminster Newton is a historic settlement that has functioned as a market town for the local area since the 1200s and provided a crossing point for bridging the River Stour. In its more recent history the formation and closure of the rail link through the town led to significant changes to its economy and function including the growth and subsequent decline of a local livestock market and associated creamery. The town does however still remain a rural market town closely linked to its surrounding agricultural economy.
- 33.1.4. The pattern and layout of many of its streets and landmark buildings reflect the town's history. The southern part of the town is designated as the Sturminster Newton Conservation Area with a significant number of listed buildings concentrated in this area and around Newton. The Castle, a promontory fort re-used as a fortified medieval manor in Newton, and Fiddlefield Manor to the east of the town are both scheduled monuments. Piddles Wood, to the south-east of the town, is designated as a Site of Special Scientific Interest and defined as an Ancient Woodland.
- 33.1.5. The town has a larger than expected range of facilities given its size. The Exchange was built on the site of the former cattle market site and acts as a hub for the local community. There is a community sports centre, a doctor's surgery, a secondary school as well as a library. The town also sits on the North Dorset Trailway which connects to Blandford and beyond.

- 33.1.6. The town has two key employment sites with Butts Pond adjacent to the town centre and North Dorset Business Park to the west of Newton.

33.2. Vision

- 33.2.1. In 2038 Sturminster Newton will:

- Be a vibrant and distinctive contemporary market town where people want to live and work;
- Have a safe and well used town centre that provides services for its rural hinterland as well as providing a wide access to a range of different leisure pursuits;
- Conserve and enhance its historic character; and
- Attract and retain employers and a range of services and facilities.

33.3. Development strategy

- 33.3.1. Sturminster Newton functions as an important local town, with a significant influence on the surrounding local area. Residential development presents an opportunity to sustain existing shops and local services, contribute to meeting the area's housing requirements by providing affordable and market homes, and attract younger families to the town. The town also has a number of key employment sites, which present opportunities to sustain and support growth in the local economy.
- 33.3.2. The Sturminster Newton Neighbourhood Plan makes provision for around 300 new homes around the town. These sites include:
- Market Field site, east of Bath Road which is capable of delivering around 80 homes;
 - North of Honeymead Fields with capacity for around 100 homes;
 - North of Manston Road allocated for around 30 homes; and
 - Land South and East of Elm Close capable of delivering around 98 homes.
- 33.3.3. The neighbourhood plan also identifies a number of smaller sites that could be developed to provide new homes. As the neighbourhood plan forms part of the development plan, there is no need to repeat its policies in the local plan.
- 33.3.4. The council has explored the potential for further growth within or around Sturminster Newton and concluded that the heritage, landscape and flood risk around the town limit the number of potentially suitable sites. Due to these constraints, future development around Sturminster Newton is likely to have a significant impact on the town, changing its function and character. For this reason and because the

neighbourhood plan makes reasonable provision at the town for the short to medium term, no new sites for development have been identified at the town.

STNW1: Residential development

- I. Residential development at Sturminster Newton will be delivered on the sites identified in the Sturminster Newton Neighbourhood Plan including at:
 - Market Field site, east of Bath Road;
 - North Honeymead Fields;
 - Land to the North of Manston Road; and
 - Land South and East of Elm Close.

33.4. Town centre strategy

- 33.4.1. The neighbourhood plan identifies a number of important community buildings uses that are considered appropriate in the town centre, provides design guidance, and identifies potential mixed-use retail development sites. It goes on to identify the following key aims for the town centre:
 - Provide convenient and affordable public car parking;
 - Create an accessible and safe public realm capable of hosting a regular market and occasional public events;
 - Provide a range of attractive shops, service providers and facilities;
 - Encourage effective use of land through re-use of previously developed land which is now redundant; and
 - Retain core facilities/services including the Exchange, Medical Centre and Post Office.
- 33.4.2. The town centre, as shown on the policies map, stretches from the historic Market Place and High Street towards the north taking in The Exchange, the Medical Centre and various retail units The neighbourhood plan identifies a number of key challenges around sustaining the prosperity of the town centre including providing access to and between these areas and ensuring that the weekly market remains vibrant.
- 33.4.3. Sturminster Newton acts as a 'Town Centre' within the retail hierarchy. Evidence suggests that the town has adequate existing provision of convenience retail for its local population with a projected need for only around 220 m². There is also a good range of comparison retailers in the town, however there is projected need for around

an additional 645 m². The primary sites for meeting this need are identified within the neighbourhood plan as:

- Land to the south of Station Road; and
- Clarke's Yard area and land at Bath Road/Old Market Hill Junction.

33.4.4. The regeneration of land at these key sites also provides the opportunities to meet some of the wider aims identified in the neighbourhood plan, in particular creating a safe and accessible public realm, providing a range of different shops and facilities and effective use of land.

STNW2: Sturminster Newton town centre

- I. Proposals for town centre uses will be focused within the town centre boundary as identified on the policies map.
- II. The sites identified in the neighbourhood plan should be the initial focus for additional retail and town centre uses. Development of these sites should enhance the public realm and create safe and convenient walking routes around the town centre.

33.5. Supporting the local economy

33.5.1. The employment sites serving the Sturminster Newton area are Butts Pond Industrial Estate in the town centre and North Dorset Business Park to the west of Newton on the edge of the town. Butts Point is an established businesses park with little space for expansion.

33.5.2. North Dorset Business Park covers an area of around 7.3 hectares, part of which is occupied by established companies. Recent investment of the site has unlocked further areas through the provision of key infrastructure including a new service road and serviced plots for sale. Approximately 3.0 hectares of land remain developable which could deliver a significant boost to the local jobs market.

STNW3: North Dorset Business Park

- I. Proposals for town centre uses will be focused within the town centre boundary as identified on the policies map.
- II. The sites identified in the neighbourhood plan should be the initial focus for additional retail and town centre uses. Development of these sites should enhance the public realm and create safe and convenient walking routes around the town centre.

- 33.5.3. Due to North Dorset Business Park's location on the edge of town, opportunities for improving foot and cycle access between it and the town should be secured through development.

The North Dorset Trailway

- 33.5.4. The route for the North Dorset Trailway passes through Sturminster Newton. The Trailway follows the route of the former Somerset and Dorset Joint Railway which connected the town to Poole in the south and Templecombe in the north. Parts of it have been converted into a recreational off-road route which forms a convenient cycle and walking connection between the town and nearby villages. The Trailway currently starts near Spetisbury and passes through Blandford, Stourpaine and Shillingstone. There are opportunities to extend the Trailway northward from Sturminster Newton toward Stalbridge to help reduce car journeys between the two towns. This would help reduce the impact of nitrogen deposition on the Rooksmoor SAC that straddles the A357.

The neighbourhood plan also identifies a series of significant pedestrian and cycle routes and proposes the creation of a safe pedestrian link between the North Dorset Business Park and the town. This could be achieved in part through the extension of the Trailway to the west of the town.

STNW₄: The North Dorset Trailway

- I. The route of the former railway between Sturminster Newton and Stalbridge will be protected for the extension of the North Dorset Trailway.
- II. Development in the town should contribute towards extending the Trailway and make connections with the town and North Dorset Business Park.

Q: Sturminster Newton

- 1: Do you agree with the suggested approach and what it is trying to achieve?
- 2: What about the suggested policy wording?
- 3: Could any amendments improve the policy or its strategy?

Figure 33.1: Map of development at Sturminster Newton

