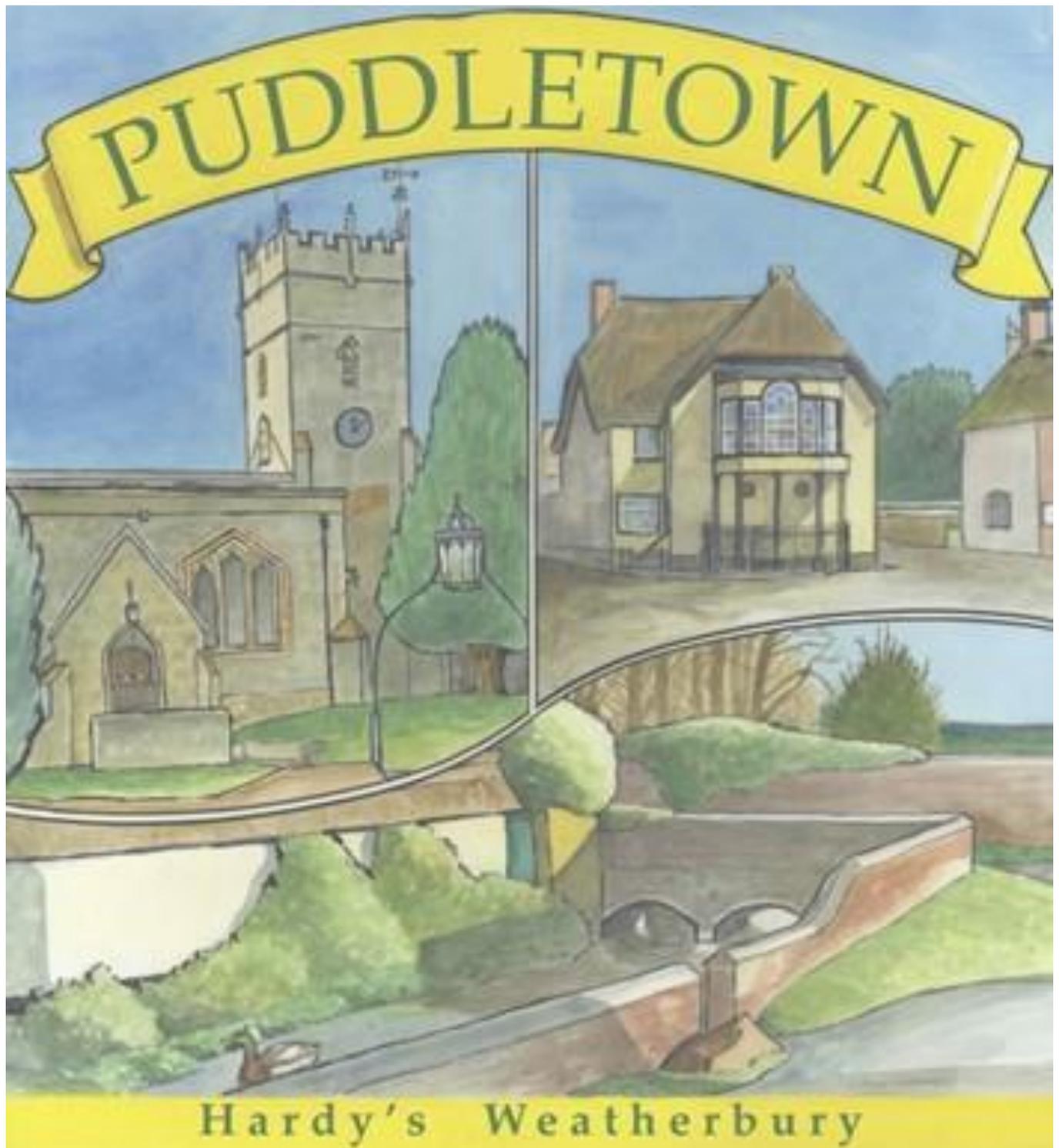


# Puddletown Neighbourhood Plan 2019 - 2031

Referendum Version: May 2021



Produced by: Puddletown Area Parish Council

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# Foreword (what this Plan does)

## ***The status of this document***

This document is the Neighbourhood Plan for the parish of Puddletown. When finalised, it will have the official status of being part of the “development plan” for the area, to be used by Dorset Council to determine planning applications, and therefore what is built (and what isn't). At this time, it has been revised following the pre-submission consultation and submitted to Dorset Council, and further changes may be suggested by the independent Examiner. Puddletown residents then get the final say (through our own referendum) as to whether the plan should be used.

## ***Who wrote it?***

The Plan has been prepared by local residents, shaped by the feedback from the various consultations, with technical input from a range of planning and other experts, on behalf of the Parish Council (who are legally responsible for Neighbourhood Planning).

## ***How long will the Plan last?***

This Plan looks ahead to 2031. But we will need to consider reviewing this Plan before then - probably in about 2024 (when the new Dorset Local Plan has been agreed).

## ***So what is planned?***

A key message that came through all the consultations was how much local people valued their environment. So this has very much shaped this Plan, and we have included policies to **protect important green spaces** in and around the village (such as the Green) but also a number of policies to **protect other landscape, wildlife and historic features**

such as the watermeadows, the groups of trees, woodlands and copses dotting the landscape and the hedge-lined rural lanes, and the views out to the surrounding countryside. The history of the village and cultural connections (particularly with Thomas Hardy) are also highlighted.

The **main need** for development in our area is for **housing, and, in particular, genuinely affordable housing**. When we consulted, most people felt that the previous rate of growth (around **6 to 7 dwellings per year**) was acceptable, and (following further checks) we have taken this as the basis for the housing target in our plan. This level of growth is underpinned by a **desire to keep Puddletown as a thriving village**. No community can stand still - you either go backwards or forwards - so development is needed in order to ensure that we keep and enhance our businesses and services



which we all like so much, such as our schools, the surgery, village shop, local pub etc...

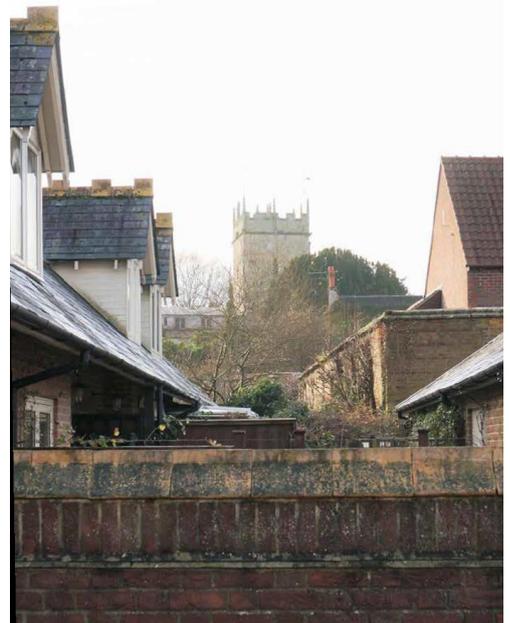
We have identified **two sites**, in addition to that already with planning permission, to meet this need. The first is **the lower-lying section of the field off Athelhampton Road**, for housing, publicly accessible green space and an area for community use. The second site is the **built-up yard area at Northbrook Farm**, for housing with a green space for public use to the south. Because these sites will provide enough housing, **we do not need to have inappropriate infilling** that would reduce the open, rural character of the village, or release other greenfield sites.

To remain a thriving village and retain our **sense of community**, we also need to **support our community facilities**. We have reserved land for the **middle school expansion** as well as the **expansion of the cemetery**, and will look to negotiate funding to improve these and other facilities, such as the recreation ground, sports pavilion and village hall, where we can.

We have found **no evidence of any significant need to identify more employment land**, and we understand that the local plan policies wouldn't prevent the expansion of the existing employment areas or small-scale sites on the edge of the village from being considered. So we don't think we need to include specific policies in our plan for employment, but we will keep this topic under review.

There is also **design guidance** in the plan, that reflects the **distinctive character of our village**, lessons learnt from recent developments, and the changes that may be needed to **support zero-carbon homes**, such as solar panels and ground source heat pumps, both of which had a lot of local support.

We ask developers to use the **latest information on flood risk** to ensure that development does not take place in the flood areas or worsen flooding off-site, and similarly raised awareness of the need to **properly assess the impacts of noise** from traffic on the A35.



**Traffic (speed and parking)** is a real concern for local residents. So we also want to make sure that people are able to **walk and cycle safely** around our village (and out to the surrounding countryside and even on to Tolpuddle and Dorchester) through improving the area's **interconnectivity**. So we have included a policy that deals with these matters, as well as one on having enough parking provision.

Altogether, there are 16 planning policies that we have drafted, together with 6 projects identified for the Parish Council and others to take forward.

# 1. Introduction

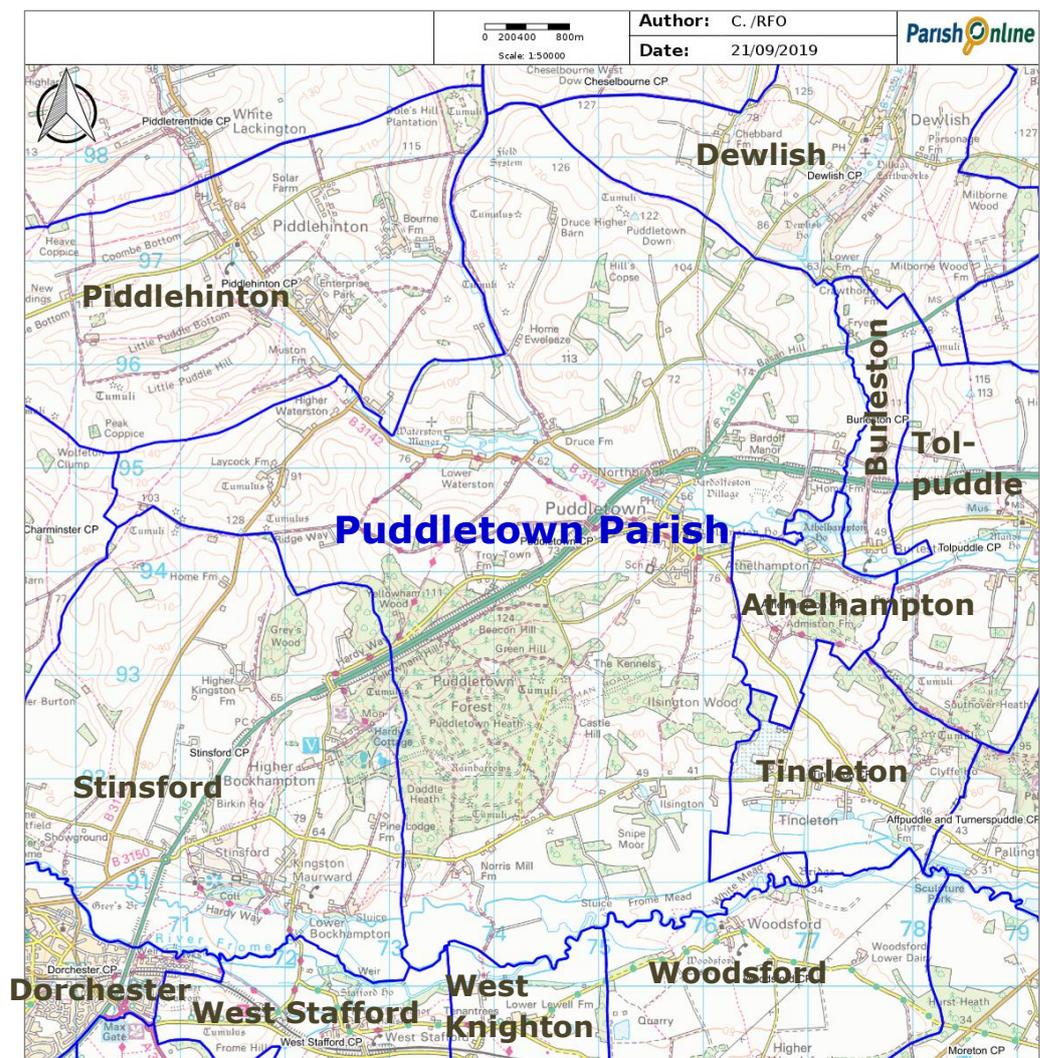
## 1.1 Overview

1.1.1 Puddletown is a village and associated civil parish in Dorset, England, with a population of about 1,400 residents<sup>1</sup>. Its local services, such as the shop and schools, are also used by people in the surrounding parishes, and Puddletown is part of a group Parish Council (with Athelhampton, Burleston and Tolpuddle).

1.1.2 The village is located at an historic junction of two main routes, the former A35 Dorchester to Bere Regis road (now bypassed to the north) and the A354 Blandford road, and lies to the south of the River Piddle, from which it derives its name. It is about 5 miles northeast of the county town Dorchester, with the larger Poole / Bournemouth conurbation about 15 miles to the east and Blandford Forum about 10 miles to the north-east.

*Map 1.  
The Parish of Puddletown – the designated Neighbourhood Plan area*

1.1.3 The civil parish is bisected by the River Piddle and the A35, extending about 1½ miles to the north, up to the chalk watershed of Puddletown Down, and 2 miles to the south to the flood plain and watermeadows of the River Frome. It includes the majority of Puddletown Forest to the west, and comes to the edge of Athelhampton House to the east. In total it covers 7,185 acres.



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<sup>1</sup> The Office for National Statistics estimated the combined population of Puddletown and Athelhampton parishes in 2017 as 1,492 <https://apps.geowessex.com/stats/AreaProfiles/Parish/puddletown-and-athelhampton>

1.1.4 Puddletown is a distinctive and exceptional village and parish. Local residents not only appreciate the natural and environmental qualities of the village, but consider they have a duty to protect them for future generations who choose to live in, work in and visit the area. They consider there is a real sense of community, and want to keep and, if possible, improve the range of community facilities such as the schools, doctors' surgery, village hall and library, vets, the local village shop / post office and the local pub. People also recognise that local businesses are important to the village economy. They want to support those existing businesses whilst attracting new enterprises, providing they are in keeping with the special qualities of the area. Importantly, people see the need for modest growth in housing, provided it is controlled, designs are in keeping with the character of existing village buildings, so that the sustainability of the village is enhanced.

**What is a Neighbourhood Plan, and why do we need one?**

1.1.5 A Neighbourhood Plan can be used by communities like Puddletown to develop a shared vision and to shape the development and growth of their local area. It provides us with the tools to choose where we want new homes and other buildings, what those new buildings should look like and what infrastructure should be provided. This will mean that, when landowners apply for planning permission for new buildings, or to make changes to existing buildings and land, their plans are more likely to get approved if they meet the requirements set out in this Neighbourhood Plan (and more likely to be refused if they do not).



**POLICIES** = the basis on which planning applications, submitted by landowners and developers, will be judged by Dorset Council (as the Local Planning Authority). The supporting text to these provides further guidance as to why and how they should be applied.

**PROJECTS** = are proposals for action (involving the Parish Council and others) to help address other issues highlighted through this Plan's preparation but which may not be resolved through development that would require planning permission.

1.1.6 Without a Neighbourhood Plan, planning decisions will be based on the wider Local Plan for the area. At the time of writing, this was the West Dorset, Weymouth & Portland

Local Plan 2015<sup>2</sup>. The Local Plan includes general policies for settlements like Puddletown, allowing infill development to take place within the village and some types of development to take place adjoining the settlement and in the wider countryside, but has not specifically allocated new sites for development. However, the Neighbourhood Plan (which sits alongside the Local Plan) can provide more certainty over what is needed and what isn't, taking into account the views of the community and our more detailed knowledge of this area.

1.1.7 This Neighbourhood Plan reflects the many issues and aspirations highlighted by those who contributed to the survey, discussions and meetings. The consultation effort in preparing the plan has been considerable and, while in general conformity with the principles of the adopted Local Plan, the Puddletown Neighbourhood Plan ensures that the views of people living in Puddletown have a legal status in the planning process, as intended by the Localism Act 2011.

1.1.8 There is an emphasis in the Plan on building and development. However impacts on transport, commerce, the environment and the underlying infrastructure of amenities and society in the village and wider parish have been considered, and wider aspirations and goals for local improvements noted.

"Should" is used in a number of policies and phrases in this plan – but this doesn't mean the policy is optional. The word "should" in this plan means that it is expected that the policy is followed, and that very exceptional circumstances would need to be justified for it to be over-ruled.

### ***How was the Plan prepared?***

1.1.9 There has been considerable research and consultation underpinning this plan. Work started in 2015, and included household surveys, a housing needs assessment, site assessments, a three day design forum in the Village Hall, together with other events that addressed over 500 people. All of the policies and projects in the Plan have been derived from this research. Various environmental checks have been undertaken to comply with the legal requirements. More details of the related reports produced to support this plan are provided in **Appendix 3**.



<sup>2</sup> <https://www.dorsetcouncil.gov.uk/planning-buildings-land/planning-policy/west-dorset-and-weymouth-portland/adopted-local-plan/adopted-local-plan.aspx>

1.1.10 The Plan has to align with overarching principles and the strategy for development that are in the Local Plan for the area. A wide range of statutory consultees, including Natural England, Historic England, the Environment Agency and Dorset Council reviewed the plan at its pre-submission consultation stage. It was also tested by an Independent Examiner, who had to decide whether it met the basic conditions that are set out in the Neighbourhood Plan legislation (and if not, what changes were necessary). The final decision, on whether Dorset Council (as the Local Planning Authority) should use the Plan, is voted on by local residents in a referendum.

The plan was prepared by the Neighbourhood Plan Group, which in 2019 comprised Peter Churchill, Jane Cox, Janey Gordon, Janet Ranger-Dennis and John Ridout, with the support of Anna Bendall (Parish Clerk) and Jo Witherden (Dorset Planning Consultant Limited). Thanks also go to all the contributors who helped in the earlier stages, including Paul Langdon who led the Steering Group during 2017 – 2019, all other former Steering Group members, and Richard Eastham (Feria Urbanism) who provided consultancy support.

### ***How long will the Plan last?***

1.1.11 Planning does not stand still, and we will need to consider reviewing this Plan before too long whatever timeframe it covers. Dorset Council has committed to preparing a new Dorset Local Plan, which is expected to replace the adopted Local Plan for West Dorset, Weymouth and Portland by 2023. When the new Local Plan is in place, some of the policies in this Neighbourhood Plan could become out of date, so it will make sense to consider what aspects should be updated at that time. A review will also provide an opportunity to reflect on which policies are working well, and which could be improved upon.

1.1.12 So this Plan covers the period from 2019 (when it was drafted) to 2031. Whilst it was initially thought that it would run to 2036 (which was the provisional date for the Local Plan Review), it now makes sense for it to cover a slightly shorter period to 2031 (in line with the adopted Local Plan), anticipating that it will be reviewed and potentially rolled forward by 2026.

## **2019 - 2031**

1.1.13 Monitoring (such as how much and what mix of housing is being achieved) will also help to ensure that the need to review the Plan is kept under consideration. The following factors will be monitored by the Parish Council, working with Dorset Council, on an annual basis:

- New dwellings created within the parish (net) – by type and tenure;
- New employment space created within the parish (net) – by use class;
- New / improved community facilities within the parish (net);
- New / improved pedestrian / cycle routes within the parish (net);
- The capacity of the First and Middle Schools, and Puddletown Surgery;

- Road traffic accident data within the parish;
- Progress on the Local Plan Review;
- Planning applications approved where an objection has been raised (and sustained) by the Parish Council highlighting a conflict with a Neighbourhood Plan policy.

1.1.14 The decision to review the Plan will need to be made by the Parish Council (as the responsible body), with local residents involved in the review process, as they have been with the drafting of this Plan.

## 1.2 Vision and Objectives

"The concept of sustainable development can be interpreted in many different ways, but at its core is an approach to development that looks to balance different, and often competing, needs against an awareness of the environmental, social and economic limitations we face as a society." <sup>3</sup>

1.2.1 The vision and objectives that underpin this Plan were developed from public engagement at the meetings and consultations, and have taken into account the concept of sustainable development. To achieve sustainable development, a thoughtful and sensitive approach is required; one that meets identified and projected needs for housing and other uses, but in doing so does not needlessly damage the environment or undermine the social fabric and well-being of the village or wider parish.

### ***Our vision***

**In 2031 Puddletown will be a safe, thriving, and well-connected village, maintaining its unique character and sense of community spirit, and welcoming residents of all ages and abilities.**



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<sup>3</sup> This definition was proposed by the Sustainable Development Commission (SDC) which was the UK Government's independent adviser on sustainable development up to 2011 - <http://www.sd-commission.org.uk/pages/what-is-sustainable-development.html>

## **Our objectives**

Puddletown will...

- **retain the character of the village and surrounding countryside**, maintaining our much-loved green spaces and views within and out of the village, archaeological sites, historic buildings and the links to Thomas Hardy, with any new development being well-designed and environmentally-friendly. There should be no inappropriate infilling or unplanned sprawl.
- **look after the environment for today's and future generations**, protecting ecological habitats, providing adequate flood defences, reducing and mitigating possible impacts from climate change, and avoiding harmful levels of noise from the A35.
- **develop its housing stock**, including the development of significant quantities of genuinely affordable housing for local people, at a pace commensurate with the desire to keep the village thriving.
- **maintain and improve opportunities for social interaction** within the village, addressing all age groups, to create a safe, secure and welcoming environment, and enhanced community spaces, and **ensure that infrastructure is planned to meet the needs** at the heart of our community, including but not limited to, schools, doctors, vets, broadband, bus services, children's play areas and a shop, post office and pub.
- **encourage new, and support existing, businesses and services** in order to increase local job opportunities. This may include an increase in the number of shops and services and help improve social opportunities for villagers, and an increase in tourism opportunities based on the area's unique history and character, but without harming the environment.
- **be a well-connected and pedestrian safe village**, with public footpaths, bridleways and cycle ways designed to provide a choice of inter-connecting routes within the village and beyond, and roads designed to ensure that traffic speed is maintained at a safe level and there is sufficient public and private car parking to avoid associated parking problems.

1.2.2 The planning policies contained in this Plan are intended to achieve these objectives – so these objectives should be referred to when interpreting the policies if there is any doubt how they should be applied.



## 2. Local Landscape Character and the Built Environment

**Puddletown will retain the character of the village and surrounding countryside**, maintaining our much-loved green spaces and views within and out of the village, archaeological sites, historic buildings and the links to Thomas Hardy, with any new development being well-designed and environmentally-friendly. There should be no inappropriate infilling or unplanned sprawl.

2.1.1 During the consultation phase of the Plan, one overwhelming message was the value people put upon the exceptional landscapes within which they live. There is much affection and appreciation of the local green areas and spaces around the village, including the surrounding hills, meadows and woodlands.

2.1.2 Puddletown residents are also rightly proud of their heritage, including the character of the conservation area and the many surviving historic buildings. Puddletown provided the inspiration for the fictional settlement of Weatherbury in Thomas Hardy's novel 'Far from the Madding Crowd'. Weatherbury Farm, the home of principal character Bathsheba Everdene, is based on Waterston Manor within the parish.

### 2.2 Local Green Spaces

2.2.1 National planning policy allows for green spaces that are well related to existing settlements and hold a particular local value to be designated as "Local Green Spaces". This designation provides strong protection against development, that should last well beyond the Neighbourhood Plan period. So it is not appropriate to extensive tracts of countryside, or land which may have planning permission to be developed or may need to be released for housing, employment or community buildings / infrastructure in the longer term.

*Figure 1.  
The Green*

*An example of one of the many much-loved spaces in and around the village*

2.2.2 Many of these spaces may be in public ownership, but the designation can be applied to privately owned land provided that it is clearly valued by the community and of obvious importance for its recreational, landscape, historic, cultural or wildlife value.



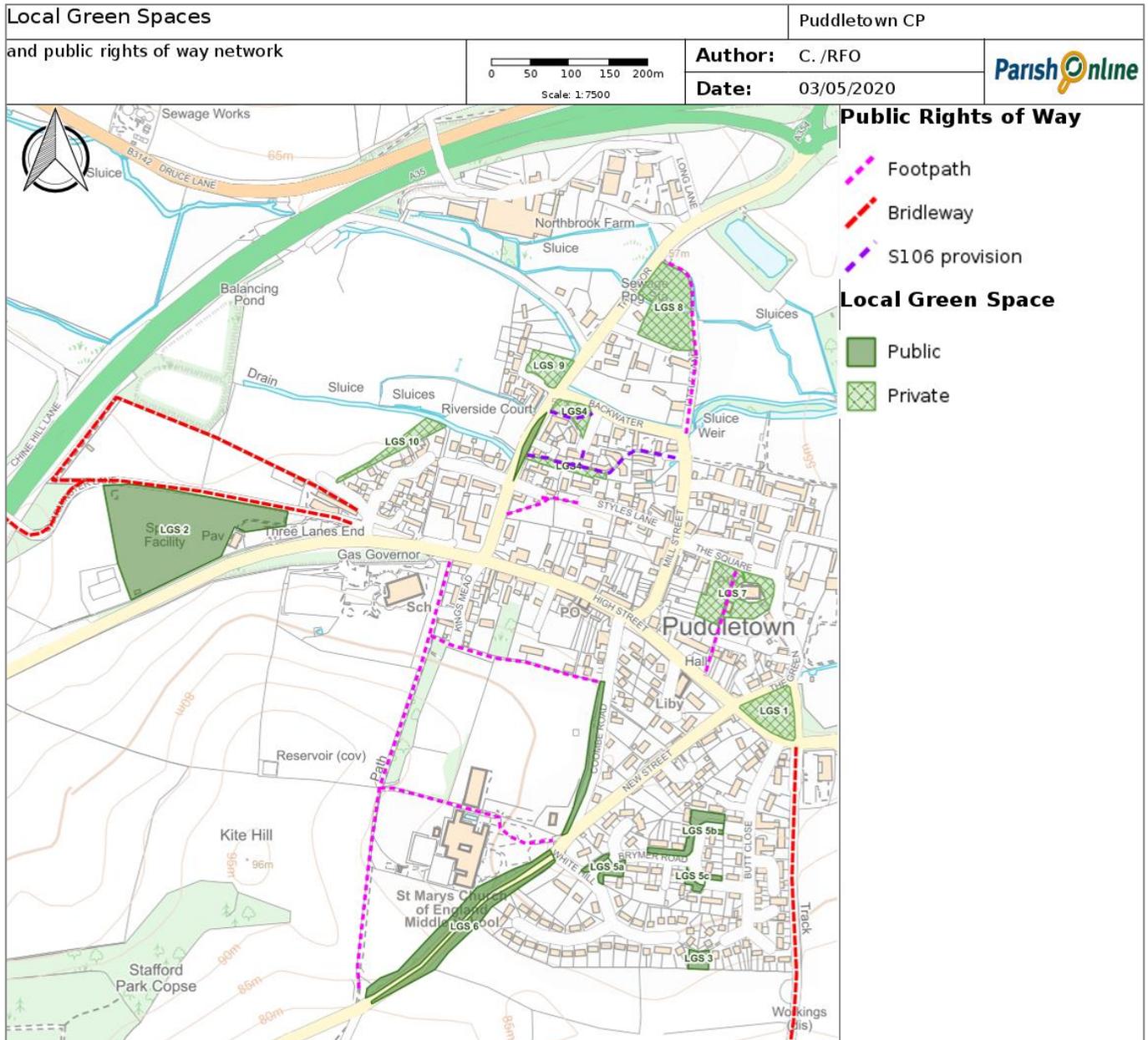
2.2.3 The areas identified for designated as Local Green Spaces are:

*Table 1. Local Green Spaces*

<b>Local Green Space</b>		<b>Reason for designation</b>
1	The Green (private land)	The Green is central to the village, both in terms of location and heritage, equivalent to many villages' central 'green'. It has old and much loved trees, which support wildlife. The Conservation Area Appraisal notes that space as visually important.
2	Recreation Park (public land)	The park is the main recreation area for the village with Pavilion and changing rooms, as well as a children's play area. It hosts cricket, football, 5 aside football and tennis matches.
3	Butt Close Recreation Park (public land)	This recreation area was built to serve children who live in the Butt Close / Whitehill / Brymer Road following significant housing construction there. It is dedicated to younger children who cannot easily get to the main recreation area.
4	Catmead green space (private land / highway verge / public footpaths)	These green spaces provide a landscaped setting to houses within this part of the Conservation Area, creating an attractive sense of openness close to the River Piddle, a pleasant space to wait at the bus stop and to enhances the public footpaths that connect through the area.
5	Brymer Road green spaces (public land)	The green spaces are divided into 2 main areas, one at the connection of Brymer Road and Whitehill, the other towards Butt Close. They provide a green 'lung' for the residents of this area, which is characterised by otherwise intensive c20 housing.
6	The Coombe (including path alongside the Middle School) (public land / unregistered)	The Coombe as a piece of land is one of the best 'holloways' in the area, with the trees creating a tunnel of vegetation (and subject to a group Tree Preservation Order). This collection of green spaces (up Coombe Road and White Hill) is held in high regard by residents, who walk in this direction to access the school and Puddletown Forest.
7	St Mary's church yard (church land / public footpath)	St Mary's church yard is another 'green lung' for the village, also providing peace and a place for quiet contemplation for many residents. It forms the setting of the Grade I Listed church and many of the separately listed tombs and monuments.
8	Riverside land (private land / public footpath)	The Riverside area, off Little Lane (track) to the east of the Blandford Road, provides a verdant, tranquil landscape next to an important walking route for residents, and supports wildlife.
9	The Moor (private land)	The Moor provides an important green area rich in vegetation and protects the houses on the Moor from the vehicle traffic on the Blandford Road, providing an appropriate setting to No.s 3-8 The Moor which are Grade II Listed.
10	Land adjoining Greenacres (private land)	The area of natural land to the west of the Greenacres estate is protected by a S106 agreement (ref 1/E/2000/0329). It provides habitat for bats, nesting birds and other wildlife, and acts as a natural setting for the houses of Greenacres.

Local Green Spaces are not necessarily public open space, and their designation should not be regarded as conveying any additional public rights of access to these areas. For this reason, we have made clear on the map those areas which are publicly owned and accessible. We have also indicated public rights of way, where these are known to exist.

Map 2. Local Green Spaces (Private and Public)



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2.2.4 The only form of development that would be appropriate in such locations, would be ancillary development to support their on-going function (such as outdoor sports and recreation facilities within the Recreation Park). Development proposals adjoining such sites should also be considered, to ensure that the development would not have an adverse impact on the Local Green Space. For example, the approval of a noisy industrial unit adjoining a space noted for its tranquillity would be inappropriate, as would a large, ugly building or a large area of blank wall adjoining an area noted for its landscape contribution.



Figure 2. Puddletown's Recreation Park

2.2.5 Puddletown Forest is also highly valued by residents but does not readily meet the criteria for Local Green Space designation. Its protection is covered under policy 2.

### Policy 1. Local Green Spaces

The sites listed in Table 1 (and as shown on the Policies Map) are designated as Local Green Spaces, and no development will be permitted within or immediately adjoining them that would undermine their reason for designation.

## 2.3 Local landscape features

2.3.1 Puddletown lies within an area of chalk valley and downland associated with the River Piddle, with a distinctive area of heath / forest mosaic to the south (around Puddletown Forest), and valley pasture associated with the River Frome to the south<sup>4</sup>. The change in landscape character very much reflects the underlying geology, from Spetisbury chalk to West Park Farm Member sand then clay<sup>5</sup>. The Dorset Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (a nationally important landscape) skirts around the northern edge of the parish, and the higher ground to the south of the parish boasts uninterrupted views of the surrounding landscape.



Figure 3. The historic water meadows

2.3.2 The area immediately surrounding the village is part of the Cerne and Piddle Valleys and Chalk Downland and is described in the West Dorset Design Guidelines - Landscape Character Assessment<sup>6</sup>. The assessment identifies a number of characteristics, including:

- occasional small regular native woodlands and tree groups associated with built form and corners of fields, or functioning as shelterbelts;
- surviving patches of semi-natural chalk habitat supporting a rich diversity of grassland, scrub and woodland including relic hazel coppice;
- small-scale pattern of pasture fields within the valley floor. The fertile alluvial soils support a diversity of vegetation and wet grazing pasture enclosed by thick, species rich hedgerows and occasional hedgerow trees;

<sup>4</sup> <https://explorer.geowessex.com/> Dorset Landscape Types layer

<sup>5</sup> <http://mapapps.bgs.ac.uk/geologyofbritain/home.html?location=puddletown>

<sup>6</sup> <https://www.dorsetcouncil.gov.uk/planning-buildings-land/planning-policy/west-dorset-and-weymouth-portland/other-planning-documents/pdfs/sg/landscape-character-assessment-february-2009.pdf>

- linear woods of riparian species such as willow and alder follow the watercourses, flanked by wet sedge and rush, and historic water meadows are evident as subtle field patterns and some water meadow channels survive.

2.3.3 The trees of the village are dominant features of the landscape and contribute to the overall beauty of the area. The latest Conservation Area Appraisal<sup>7</sup> notes that the village edges “are blessed with a number of fine, mature trees, at Ilsington House (seen to particular advantage along Athelhampton Road and The Green); on The Green itself; in the churchyard; between Styles Lane and the south side of High Street; and along The Backwater. Large yew hedges bound the drive to The Stables. There is a solitary yew, on the pavement edge between Puddletown House and no. 8 High Street that is of visual value.” The Conservation Area designation gives protection to these and the many other trees within it.



*Figure 4. The Backwater*

2.3.4 The area around Puddletown Forest has its own landscape character description. The area has much more extensive tree cover and is scattered with swallets and dolines, geological hollows, formed by the erosion of the soluble chalk by water. The assessment notes the intricate network of public rights of way and private access tracks that provide access throughout the area. The majority of the Forest is managed by the Forestry Commission and covers a total area of 301 Ha (extending either side of the A35 and westwards beyond the parish boundary). Douglas Fir and Corsican Pine predominate, with a small proportion (less than 10%) of broadleaved tree species. Open space is

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<sup>7</sup> Produced in 2007 by West Dorset District Council and adopted as supplementary guidance - <https://www.dorsetcouncil.gov.uk/planning-buildings-land/planning/planning-constraints/conservation-areas/west-dorset/pdfs/puddletown-stinsford-and-lower-bockhampton-and-tolpuddle-conservation-area-appraisal.pdf>

increasing as a result of felling for heathland restoration, but the retention of sporting rights by the leaser limits the formal provision of recreation facilities in the forest<sup>8</sup>. Of particular concern to residents in recent years has been the instances of anti-social behaviour in Puddletown Forest.



Figure 5. Puddletown Forest

**Project P1.** The Puddletown Area Parish Council and Dorset Council will continue to liaise with the Forestry Commission and local police to ensure good, clear access to and public safety in the environs of Forest.

2.3.5 The history of the area is clearly evident in the landscape. The lanes have a rural character with small humped bridges, and traditional fingerpost signs. There is a straight Roman road that radiates out from nearby Dorchester and passes through Puddletown Forest and the area south of the village. Surviving prehistoric monuments such as round barrows and prehistoric field systems are also visible as humps along the skyline (a number are noted as being at risk due to arable ploughing). The remains of strip lynchets of 'Celtic' fields have also been found near a few of the barrows. There are also earthworks and channels relating to water meadow management.

2.3.6 The A35 road corridor is a major feature in this open landscape, with its associated noise and lighting. Other than that, the area is relatively tranquil and away from the village and trunk road, the dark night skies can be enjoyed.

## Policy 2. Local Landscape Features

Development will respect and where possible enhance the character of the local landscape, including the retention and reinforcement of the following key characteristics:

- groups of trees, woodlands and copses dotting the landscape and within and on the edge of the village itself, softening the visual impact of the village in wider views;
- the river corridors, streams and ditches with their associated vegetation, remnants of managed water meadows and small humped bridges;
- the historic tumuli, barrows etc that are evident in changes to the landform, particularly visible on the skylines and within the structure of the field systems;
- the hedge-lined rural lanes and traditional fingerpost signs;
- the unique character of Puddletown Forest, and its network of public rights of way and private access tracks that provide access throughout the area;
- the general lack of light pollution, particularly away from the village and A35.

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<sup>8</sup> Information on the Forest, including felling, restocking and habitat management, is available in the Forest Design Plan prepared in 2013  
<https://www.forestryengland.uk/sites/default/files/documents/Purbeck%20Forest%20Plan%20Puddletown.pdf>

## 2.4 The rural character of Puddletown Village

2.4.1 Puddletown has the characteristics of a Dorset village with its clear connections to the countryside and rural way of life. Many residents who moved here specifically chose to live in a village, and made it clear that they would not wish it to become a small town. So this policy attempts to ensure that the village retains its links with the countryside and inherent feel as a rural-based community.

2.4.2 In attempting to understand what underpins the village character, four key factors have been identified:

- There are a range of large gardens and green spaces within the village itself which make a significant contribution to its rural character, which are gradually being lost to development because of the adopted Local Plan's in principle acceptance of infilling within the defined development boundary. Recent examples include permission for the development of the paddock off



Blandford Road (just to the south side of the connection through to Styles Lane) and the land south of the High Street (behind the village shop). Whilst these sites, when considered in isolation, may not seem to be particularly significant, altogether they contribute to the interest and character of the village because of the variation in plot size and spacing that they bring. Through the earlier consultations local residents made very clear that this sort of incremental infilling, resulting in the loss of large areas of garden and undeveloped land within the village (ie that could readily accommodate one or more large, detached homes), should be stopped. Conversely, the re-purposing and/or extensions of existing buildings (for example, to provide annexed accommodation for family members or carers) would not have the same level of impact and may be supported;

- Whilst change has always happened, and the village has expanded outwards, small-scale developments have generally integrated much more successfully than large-scale developments, particularly where the latter have tended to be suburban / homogenous in character and have not connected into adjoining areas. It is important that the designs of development avoid the appearance of standard 'anywhere' houses (and also avoid too much repetition) and take advantage of all opportunities to connect with nearby paths and roads. The development of Catmead is a good example of a development that has integrated well;



- There is a close connection / inter-visibility throughout the village with the surrounding rural landscape – in particular with the watermeadows around the northern side of the village, and the hills to the south (with the fields and woodlands visible over the rooftops). The more the village expands, the more there is a danger that this inter-relationship will be lost, so particular care needs to be taken to retain and reinforce these links, and development on or close to the ridgelines (ie with development breaching the skyline when viewed from within the village) must be avoided;
- The presence of farms within and close to the village reinforces the rural character of the village, helped by the integration (rather than replacement) of the redundant farm buildings into the mix of available buildings (for housing, employment and community use). The development of Home Farm is a good example of where this has happened.



### Policy 3. Village character

The 'village' characteristics of Puddletown should be respected, in particular through:

- limiting infill, where possible, to the re-purposing and/or extensions of existing buildings within the defined development boundary. New build infill development should be avoided if it would result in the loss of large areas of garden / paddock or other undeveloped spaces which make a positive contribution to the local character;
- supporting the piecemeal, organic nature of development (and resisting large-scale estate-type developments);
- retaining the visual connection from within the village out to the watermeadows and to the fields and woodlands (and resisting development on or close to the ridgelines to the south side of the village so that new development does not hide or breach the skyline as viewed from within the village);
- retaining farm buildings within the fabric of the village.

## 2.5 Historically important places

2.5.1 Puddletown has a long and complex history. There is evidence of prehistoric human occupation in the parish (from the many round barrows and the remains of strip lynchets). It was recorded in the Domesday book, and the parish church of St Mary has Norman origins. The village has been shaped by the environmental constraints and availability of local building materials, and also influenced by the main landowners in the C18 and C19. In particular, John Brymer bought the estate of the 4th Earl of Orford in 1864, which by that time included Ilsington House, and commissioned a new school, reading room and a Home Farm as well as decent terraced cottages for his workers – the estate was eventually split up and sold to a multiplicity of private owners in 1921.



- ✓ A mixture of vernacular cottages, larger C18 and early C19 gentry houses and Victorian estate houses throughout the village, and consistent use of South Dorset limestone, cob, local brick clays, thatch and vernacular building details that give an overall unity to the village;
- ✓ Some good details, including shop fronts, doorways, boundary walls, railings and other ironwork, most notably on the western part of High Street, Mill Street, The Square, the ancillary buildings of Ilsington House and The Green;
- ✓ Many of the smaller cottages and substantial buildings relate to a major mid-Victorian development of a model farming estate (commissioned by John Brymer);
- ✓ Obvious landmarks include the (old) primary school and the Reading Room on High Street; the end elevation of no. 3 The Square; and the church tower (limited to intimate, local views and two longer views). The spired tower to The Stables is also seen from The Square and The Green. Ilsington House is a key Listed Building (Grade II\*) and has many associated estate buildings, but is not particularly visible from the village core.

### **Listed and Locally Important Buildings**

2.5.4 The parish boasts over fifty Listed buildings. These include the Grade I St Mary's Church and Waterston Manor, and the Grade II\* Ilsington House, the Old Vicarage adjoining it, and No.8, The Square.<sup>10</sup> A full list is provided in **Appendix 4**. All of these Listed buildings are nationally important heritage assets. These are protected by legislation, which means that both the buildings and their setting (the surroundings in which a heritage asset is experienced) should not be harmed by development. Whilst the setting of Listed Buildings is not often described in their Listing, of particular note are the gardens of Waterston Manor (the house is surrounded by a fine example of formal Edwardian gardens that are Registered as an Historic Park / Garden in their own right), and the grounds of Athelhampton House (which is also Registered and extends into the parish).

*Figure 6.  
16 – 30 High Street (Grade II Listed)*



2.5.5 There are also a number of Locally Important Buildings identified through the Conservation Area Appraisal in 2007, which are included in Table 3. Whilst these are not designated, they are nevertheless important heritage assets and development should be carefully assessed to see if any harm is justified (having regard to the benefits of the

development and the contribution the asset makes to the historic and architectural character of the area) and if changes could be made to reduce or avoid such harm. The Old Chapel, 1 -3 Athelhampton Road, the Blue Vinney, and Druce House, which are outside the Conservation Area, have been identified through more recent research.

<sup>10</sup> <https://historicengland.org.uk/listing/the-list/advanced-search>

Table 3. Locally Important Buildings

3 High Street	a brick, Victorian Tudor building (possibly an estate building) with stone dressings, very prominent in the approach from the west (and enhanced by the brick gate piers to yard entrance, capped with stone birds of prey)
Puddletown House, High St	a dignified early C19 brick cube, with good brickwork and a central chimney stack
27 - 41 High Street	large brick and slate estate buildings, with strong end and mid-façade gables, cartouche and octagonal chimney stacks
38a - 46b High Street	later estate houses, of brick, stone and mock half-timber; an important group in the eastern end of High Street, grouping with the school and stone estate buildings west
4 - 8 The Green	simple rendered and painted brick row, of townscape & group value
Old Chapel, 1 -3 Athelhampton Road	clearly identifiable as the congregational chapel on the 1888 OS map, the old chapel (also used as a schoolhouse) retains much of its former character through the decorative arched windows and soffits
1 The Square	handsome double bayed Victorian house on the corner with Mill St
3 - 13 Mill Street	brick and mock half-timber estate houses, of group value and a key feature in the view down Mill Street from the High Street junction
16 Mill Street	early C19 painted brick corner building, of group & townscape value
18 and 20 Mill Street	a semi-detached pair of estate houses, dated 1878, unspoilt, on an important corner site
1 and 2 Styles Lane and the wall adjacent to 3 Styles Lane	pair of flint and stone Tudor Revival estate cottages, with a date lozenge of 1911 and John Brymer's initials, attractive and unspoilt. The cob and pantiled boundary wall at the end of Styles Lane, by Sherrings Green Close and the footpath, is also of historic interest
Home Farm's outbuildings	barns, sheds and grist and sawmill, an important example of farming technology, attractive materials and details (now converted)
The Myrtles, Little Lane	with its thatched cob boundary wall; the house has a good eastern elevation to the lane
The Blue Vinney, The Moor	distinctive Village pub with gabled roof form, decorative wooden beams and central red brick chimney, recorded in the Kelly Directory of 1911 (managed by Eliza Hardy), identifiable on 1950s OS maps
Stables block, Northbrook Farm	L- shaped stable block/haybarn, believed to be constructed in the late C19, associated with the Grade II Listed Stafford Park Farm, the eastern range being accessed from their grounds.
Threshing Barn, Northbrook Farm	brick built threshing barn, forming the northern perimeter of a block of historic farm buildings associated with the Grade II Listed Stafford Park Farm. The several modern additions are of no merit.
Druce House, Birch Lane, Druce	farmhouse and associated outbuildings dating back to the 19 <sup>th</sup> century (on the 1888 OS map) and potentially linked to Thomas Hardy's Little Weatherbury Farm in "Far from the Madding Crowd"

Locally Important Buildings are not Listed – so owners are able to make internal changes to them, and also changes that are possible under permitted development rights, subject to any restrictions arising within the Conservation Area or areas subject to current or future Article 4 Directions. However any external alterations that would require planning permission would be more carefully considered due to their local importance.



**Cultural associations - the Thomas Hardy and other connections**

2.5.6 Thomas Hardy, the author of novels such as *Far From the Madding Crowd* and *Tess of the D'Urbervilles*, was closely associated with Puddletown. His maternal aunts Mary and Maria, and their three elder brothers, Christopher, Henry and William, lived in the village, and when his own parents married they lived in Higher Bockhampton, on the western edge of Puddletown Forest just outside the Neighbourhood Plan area. Hardy himself was born there (in 1840), and the cottage is now owned by the National Trust and attracts many visitors, who are keen to see not only the author's first home but also a typical 19th century skilled working man's cottage.

*Figure 7. Hardy's Cottage*



2.5.7 *Far From the Madding Crowd*, Hardy's fourth book and the one that brought him acclaim, was set in the fictional village of Weatherbury, closely modelled on Puddletown. Bathsheba, the main character in that novel, inherits Weatherbury Farm, which itself is based on Waterston Manor. St Mary's church is the site for Fanny Robins' grave that Sergeant Troy visits, and there are many other references to places and people that Hardy knew well in Puddletown.

Hardy wrote to his editor that his home was "within a walk of the district in which the incidents are supposed to occur" and that it was "a great advantage to be actually among the people described at the time of describing them".

2.5.8 There are also references to places and characters in Puddletown in some of his other books and poems. For example, St Mary's church also features in *Under the Greenwood Tree*, and his uncle John Antell (a shoemaker married to his Aunt Mary) is thought to have provided inspiration for *Jude the Obscure*. Hardy's cousin, Tryphena Sparks, also lived in Puddletown (working at the school), and was the inspiration for Hardy's poem "Thoughts of Phena at her Death". In one of his poem's he recalls walking with his mother along the Roman Road that crosses through the Forest.

*Table 4. Thomas Hardy fictional places and Puddletown associations<sup>11</sup>*

Coomb-Barn	Barn south of Puddletown
Coomb-Ewelease	Sheep pasture on White Hill
Elsenford	Ilsington (on the Tincton boundary and not to be confused with Ilsington House in Puddletown village)
Icen Way	The Roman road across Puddletown Heath
Little Weatherbury Farm	Druce Farm, half a mile north-west of Puddletown
Mistover	Scattering of cob and thatch cottages on Puddletown Heath
Mistover Knap	House (demolished) on Puddletown Heath

<sup>11</sup> Information derived with thanks from <http://www.eugenebirchall.co.uk>

Nest Cottage	Chine Hill Cottage, Druce (demolished)
Pydel Vale	Valley of the River Piddle upstream of Puddletown
Quiet Woman Inn	Former Wild Duck Inn, at Duck Dairy House, Duddle Heath
Roy-town	Troy Town (the hamlet below Yellowham Hill; its real name usually means slums, but there may be other derivations)
Rushy Pond	Rushy Pond, Duddle Heath
Waterstone Ridge	Waterston Ridge is half a mile south of Laycock Dairy Farm (along which the Ridge Way runs)
Weatherbury	Puddletown (Piddletown in Hardy's time). "Weatherbury" is from Weatherby Castle hill-fort, Milborne St Andrew
Weatherbury Farm	Waterston Manor, in Lower Waterston
Yalbury Hill	Yellowham Hill

2.5.9 Just prior to Hardy's birth another key event happened in this part of the world – the story of the Tolpuddle Martyrs. This led to working people having the right to organise themselves into trade unions as part of a free society. Whilst the Martyrs are most associated with Tolpuddle (to the east of Puddletown) and were tried in the Crown Courts in Dorchester (to the west) before being transported to Australia, they would have passed through Puddletown on many occasions. Similarly, visitors to the area, looking to retrace the Martyr's steps, will come through Puddletown.

**Project P2.** The Parish Council will work with the National Trust and other interested parties to promote greater understanding of the Thomas Hardy and Tolpuddle Martyr connections to the area, for example through the production of a visitor information brochure and negotiating and waymarking a Martyr's Trail from Tolpuddle to Shire Hall.

#### Policy 4. Respecting the history of Puddletown

Development within and forming the setting of the Conservation Area should respect its key characteristics and features of special interest (as described in detail in the Conservation Area Appraisal and summarised in Table 2).

In addition to the protection given to the many designated Listed buildings, support will also be given wherever practicable to the protection and, where appropriate, restoration / enhancement of the Locally Important Buildings as listed in Table 3 (and as shown on the Policies Map).

Proposals that raise awareness of the area's links with Thomas Hardy and the Tolpuddle Martyrs should receive favourable consideration, provided that these would not cause substantial harm to the environment or character of the area.

## 2.6 General design principles

2.6.1 National planning policy guidance recognises that a neighbourhood plan can play an important role in understanding and appreciating the context of an area, so that applicants have as much certainty as possible about what is likely to be acceptable and in line with local aspirations.

**Character**

2.6.2 The design forum workshops, a review of the character of the area undertaken as part of the Conservation Area Appraisal produced in 2007 and the more recent (2017) Settlement & Character Analysis by FERIA Urbanism have all informed the following design guidelines:

*Table 5. Puddletown Planning Design Guidelines*

Element	What works well (✓) and what doesn't (✘)
<p>Street frontages</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Front door canopies are a common architectural feature used and help distinguish entrances.</li> <li>✓ Curving building lines follow the gentle meanders of the back lanes.</li> <li>✓ Low walls and wrought iron fences help define public and private spaces.</li> <li>✓ Details such as ridged finishes to brick work walls, and traditional street lighting, have positively contributed to the village character.</li> <li>✓ Gaps have allowed views of local landmarks such as the church tower, sometimes unexpected, sometimes framed.</li> </ul> <p><b>What to avoid...</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✘ High boundary walls, fences, and blank building facades create unpleasant streets that feel unsafe. Stepped walls and "eyes on the street" from the ground and first floor windows can help keep pathways feeling safe, but would be further improved with room for planting and some low-level lighting.</li> </ul>
<p>Ground details and surfacing</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Opportunities for simple planting within the street, such as in front of houses and alongside footways, helps to add interest and personalise the space as well as creating a more attractive semi-rural character.</li> <li>✓ Larger trees (with spaces for these to mature) within the built-up area provide multiple benefits.</li> <li>✓ Use of materials, such as brick paving, helps to differentiate private paths.</li> <li>✓ Use of permeable ground materials softens appearances and assists with the control of rainwater run-off.</li> <li>✓ Lack of raised footway with concrete kerbs, and absence of painted lines, helps preserve a village character.</li> </ul> <p><b>What to avoid...</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✘ Poor definition of public and private spaces can lead to the under-used grassed areas and maintenance problems.</li> </ul>



Element	What works well (✓) and what doesn't (✘)
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✘ Large expanses of tarmac can give an overly urban impression – for example at the Blandford Road / High Street junction.</li> <li>✘ Parked cars, either planned or unplanned, can dominate the street scene. Sufficient parking needs to be provided, and where parking is likely to take place on the street the design should look to create breaks (eg through planting schemes) and discourage parking close to junctions.</li> <li>✘ Poorly thought through pavements that don't obviously connect places can cause frustration. Providing a choice of connections from new development to adjoining areas should be one of first considerations in good design.</li> </ul>
<p>Building styles and materials</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ A mix of building types and styles that are reflective of the different periods of development and long evolution of the settlement has worked very well in recent developments. For example, collections of working and renovated farm buildings have been cleverly converted to alternatives uses. The old school house and other key buildings provide an important link to the Victorian estate heritage and the grandeur of their past use.</li> <li>✓ Architectural compositions with a vertical emphasis tend to work well, particularly when balanced – eg vertical window details and tall chimney stacks.</li> <li>✓ Side or rear wings and humbler lean-tos provide useful extensions and add character without diminishing the design of the original building, although greater care is needed in the case of semi-detached and terraced designs.</li> <li>✓ Quirky features add to the visual richness of the village.</li> <li>✓ There is a consistent use of South Dorset limestone (typically dressed Lower Purbeck for walling and Portland Freestone ashlar), some cob, local brick clays (pale sandy yellow, mid-brown and a bright orange), and more occasionally use of orange-brown hamstone, flint and timber, and on roofs there is slate (and some stone slates), clay tiles and pantiles as well as traditional thatch, that give an overall unity to the village, particularly within the Conservation Area. A mix of render, brick and timber have provided a rural feel to more recent developments.</li> <li>✓ Small courtyard and mews layouts, for example on the sites of the sawmill and coal yard and off The Square, have worked well.</li> </ul> <p>What to avoid...</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✘ Large estates of repeated house types and designs that give a suburban feel and could be anywhere.</li> <li>✘ Undersized features, such as limited overhang at the eaves, small chimneys and dormers, suggest a meanness and lack of pride in the architecture.</li> </ul> <div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-around; align-items: center;">   </div>

Element	What works well (✓) and what doesn't (✘)
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✘ Communal garage blocks can be poorly used, creating empty uninteresting spaces.</li> <li>✘ Some materials have not weathered well – such as some of the painted brickwork and timber.</li> <li>✘ PVC-u used as an external material on buildings in historic areas, where feasible and practicable.</li> <li>✘ Meter boxes on the front walls appear as thoughtless additions.</li> </ul>
<p>Building scale and roof lines</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Village dwellings are typically two storeys in height (with 1½ storey cottages) and finished with pitched roofs.</li> <li>✓ The sub-division of some of the larger, historic buildings into apartments provides a possible precedent for the provision of flats / apartments.</li> <li>✓ There is a lot of variation in roof pitches (also reflecting the use of different materials), decorative ridge tiles (eg scalloping or crockets), and chimneystacks and flue-pots (a special feature of Puddletown, with many tall, prominent brick and stone stacks populating the village skyline), providing character.</li> <li>✓ Traditional rows of planned terraces can form a strong singular roofline punctuated by characterful chimneys and a clear repeated rhythm.</li> </ul> <p>What to avoid...</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✘ The absence, removal or diminishment of chimney stacks and pots on old and new buildings.</li> <li>✘ Solar panels on roofs that face directly onto the street or key vistas can detract from the street scene - care is needed in the choice of materials and to make these flush-fitting.</li> <li>✘ The white roof of the gym on the school playing field is far too prominent.</li> <li>✘ Some of the building that has taken place on higher ground has reduced the visual link between the village and surrounding countryside.</li> </ul> <div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-around; margin-top: 10px;">   </div>

**Renewable energy and sustainable buildings**

2.6.3 Like many communities, in Puddletown there is an increasing awareness and ‘push’ to ensure that the homes that we build now are as environmentally-friendly and energy efficient as possible. In particular, there was a lot of local support for small-scale renewables (particularly solar and ground source heat pumps on buildings). Improved energy efficiency is not only good for the environment, but should also help keep down household running costs in the long term.

2.6.4 The Government has recently launched a consultation (October 2019) suggesting further changes to Building Regulations as the best way to ensure that the homes built now put us on track to meet the national target of net zero greenhouse gas emissions by

2050. The Future Homes Standard would apply to all homes completed after 2025, making these much more efficient than those built under the current 2013 standards (achieving about 75 - 80% less emissions as a result), and putting significant reliance on clean technologies such as solar panels and air / ground source heat pumps and the use of triple glazing and insulation. Because of this, the Government is making clear that planners (and this would include Neighbourhood Plans) should not insist on higher energy efficient targets.

2.6.5 But we won't need to wait until 2025 for all these changes to happen – the Government is also proposing that an interim standard is introduced as soon as 2020, requiring a 20 - 31% reduction in the short term. Further standards will be introduced to cover changes to existing buildings and non-residential buildings.

2.6.6 Whilst there is no reason to suggest that energy efficient designs would be incompatible with the more traditional character of the village (some traditional material such as cob and stone can achieve very high levels of thermal insulation), the design of zero carbon homes (including the consideration of water as well as energy efficiency) may require a new approach and such innovation is encouraged. Innovative designs can still reflect the character of the village, but go further than traditional designs in helping to tackle climate change.

Anyone considering the installation of a ground source heating system should contact the Environment Agency at an early stage to discuss the intended location, proposed design, and operation. This is because of the potential risks to groundwater that could otherwise get polluted.

## Policy 5. Design

New development, and alterations to existing buildings, should integrate well with the surrounding area and reinforce local distinctiveness. The design of development at all scales should reflect the principles of good design as set out in Table 5, and avoid replicating those features that are cited as inappropriate for the Puddletown area.

The design of new buildings to achieve zero-carbon homes will be strongly supported, and may justify taking a different approach to the traditional vernacular due to (for example) the methods for optimising passive solar gain and cooling, the use of high quality, thermally efficient building materials, and the installation of water and/or energy efficiency measures such as greywater systems and triple glazing, provided that overall they still reflect the character of the village.



## 3. The Environment

**Puddletown will look after the environment for today's and future generations**, protecting ecological habitats, providing adequate flood defences and avoiding harmful levels of noise from the A35.

3.1.1 The local community places a very high value on the environment and ensuring that issues such as climate change and the loss of important wildlife habitats and species are taken fully into account in any and all planning decisions.

### 3.2 Wildlife and natural habitats

3.2.1 The River Frome runs along the southern border of the Plan area and has been designated as a Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI). It is a major chalk stream which supports rare and scarce aquatic invertebrates, various breeding riverside birds and a range of fish species.

3.2.2 Other locally important wildlife areas identified through the work of the Dorset Wildlife Trust include:

- Druce Watermeadows – 7.7ha site of old watermeadows with a relic flora;
- Duddle Heath – 16.6ha site, a large area of heathland restoration;
- Hills Coppice – 7.7ha site of ash/hazel coppice with good ground flora;
- Home Eweleaze – 2.3ha site consisting of a west-facing chalk bank;
- Ilsington Wood – 82.2ha site that lies partly within the parish, it is a very large woodland, which is mostly deciduous with a rich ground flora;
- Puddletown Forest – 26.1ha site of areas of open managed heathland;
- Stafford Park Copse – 4.1ha site of mixed plantation and semi-natural woodland;
- Yellowham Wood – 49.8ha site that lies partly within the parish, it is a large mainly deciduous woodland with a rich flora and butterfly populations.

3.2.3 There are further areas of ancient and semi-natural woodland, deciduous woodland, wood-pasture and parkland located all over the Plan area, and grasslands associated with the floodplain of the River Piddle, just north of the village, which are also of potential ecological interest.

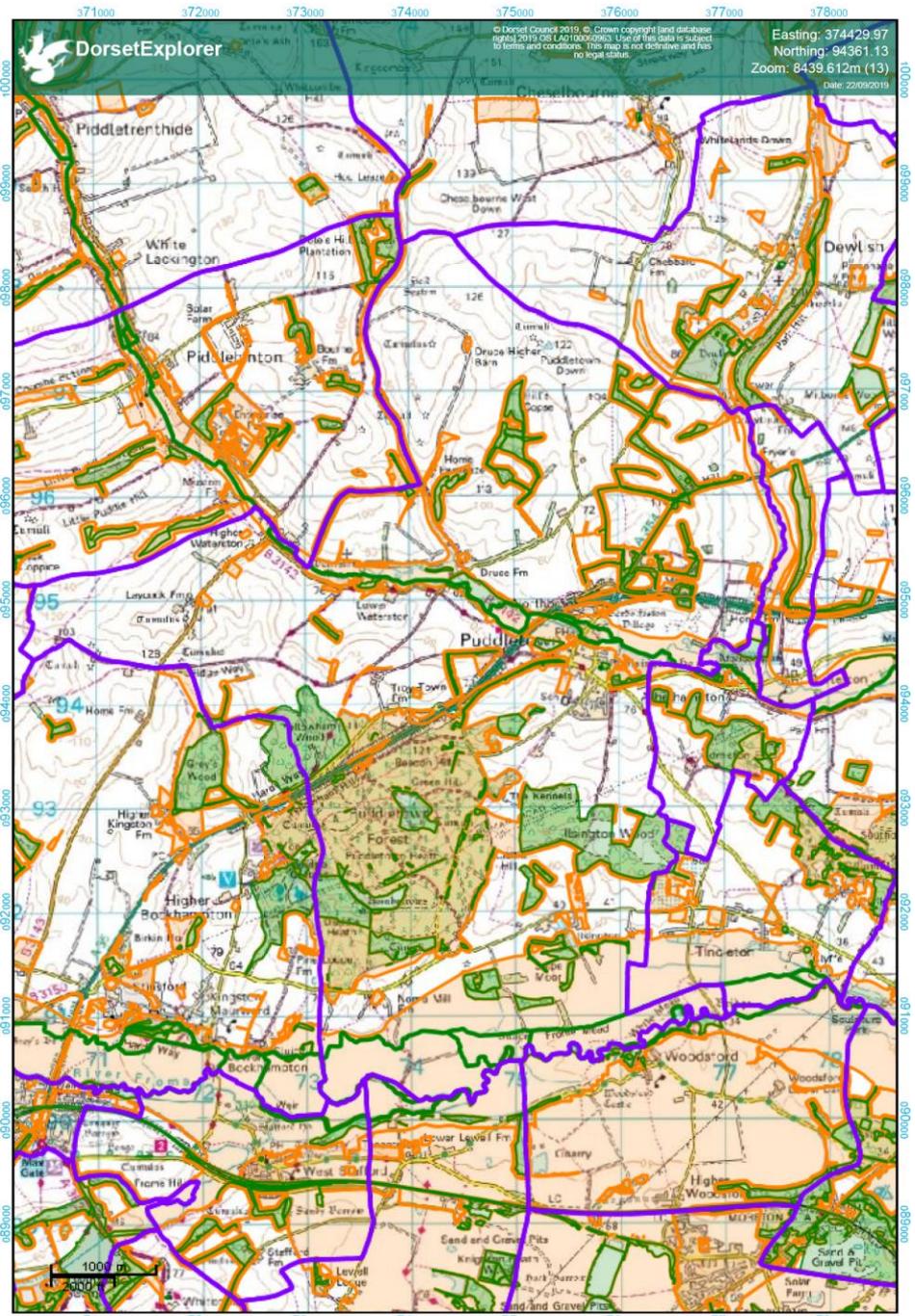
3.2.4 Thorncombe Wood Local Nature Reserve is located just outside the plan area to the south west (connected to Puddletown Forest). This site incorporates an area of around 25ha of deciduous and mixed woodland as well as open areas of bracken and fragments of heath.

3.2.5 Many of these areas support protected species, which may also be found elsewhere across the Plan area. For example, the chalk streams are an extremely important habitat for trout, salmon, eels, invertebrates, otters and water voles. Hedgerows and trees provide both roosting and foraging opportunities for a range of bird and bat species, and many rural barns and roof voids provide similar roosting opportunities. It is important that we consider and respect local wildlife in all of our actions, and take opportunities to improve and extend wildlife areas through appropriate planting and management.

3.2.6 The Dorset Environment Record Centre, working with the Dorset Local Nature Partnership, have mapped existing and potential wildlife areas across Dorset. Slow-worm, Common Lizard and Grass Snake have all been recorded as present in recent reptile surveys where there was grassland and scrub (but no sign of Great Crested Newts).

3.2.7 Dorset Council requires the submission of a certified Biodiversity Mitigation Plan in cases where the site size exceeds 0.1ha and on smaller sites where there could be important habitats or protected species present (for more details please refer to their validation process).

3.2.8 Even where development is unlikely to impact on existing wildlife, measures can and should be taken to provide new habitats – such as the inclusion of bird, bat or bee boxes on buildings, creating a pond or other water feature in gardens, or even compost heaps and tree planting.



*Map 4. Puddletown's existing and potential wildlife areas*

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**Policy 6. Wildlife and Natural Habitats**

Development should protect and, where practicable, enhance biodiversity, through an understanding of the wildlife interest that may be affected by development, together with an understanding of the likely impacts of climate change on these species and habitats,

and the inclusion of measures that will protect the existing ecological network and secure an overall biodiversity gain.

Works that will support the ecological improvement of the network of existing and potential ecological sites, including their climate change resilience, will be supported.

3.2.9 Whilst there are no European designated sites within the parish, there are European designated sites in close proximity (including large areas of land to the east and south of the parish) which could be indirectly affected by development. This includes Poole Harbour (which the River Piddle flows into) and the Dorset heathlands between Bere Regis and Bovington, and at Warmwell and Winfrith.

3.2.10 Poole Harbour has been deteriorating due to the increased nitrogen levels from sewage and agricultural practices in the surrounding area that gradually make their way to the harbour. To ensure that any adverse impact on Poole Harbour is avoided, development will be required to demonstrate that it will include specific and appropriately located mitigation measures. These need to be implemented in a timely fashion in order to ensure that development is nutrient neutral from the start of its operational phase, and must continue for the duration of the development's effects. This could, for example, be achieved by securing additional agricultural land for land uses with a low nutrient status that would offset the anticipated increases in nitrogen from the development. Such land could also have the benefit of providing recreational and biodiversity benefits (eg community woodland, community orchards, a local nature reserve, new wetlands etc). A financial contribution to strategic mitigation measures may be an appropriate alternative to direct provision of mitigation. In this case it will be necessary to liaise with Dorset Council and Natural England to confirm an appropriate mitigation scheme to which the contributions will be directed and to ensure any contributions are sufficient to fully mitigate the impacts of the development on the Poole Harbour internationally designated sites.

3.2.11 Evidence has shown that residents living within 5km of protected heathland will tend to visit the heathland areas (unless other more attractive spaces are available nearby), leading to increased damage and wildlife disturbance. The accepted solution (set out in the Dorset Heathlands Planning Framework SPD) is to put in place measures to divert recreational pressure away from heathland. Only a small strip of land along the eastern boundary of the parish, and an area of land extending about 2km in from the southern extent of the parish, to either side of Ilsington Road, lies within 5km of protected heathland. As there is unlikely to be a significant amount of residential development within the 5km zone in the parish, it is unlikely that additional recreational land needs to be secured within the parish. However, if any new dwellings are built in this zone (for example, under the Local Plan policies that allow rural workers dwellings), a financial contribution secured through a S106 legal agreement towards a suitable project (which could potentially include improved access to Puddletown Forest) is likely to be the most appropriate solution.

## **Policy 7. European and internationally protected sites**

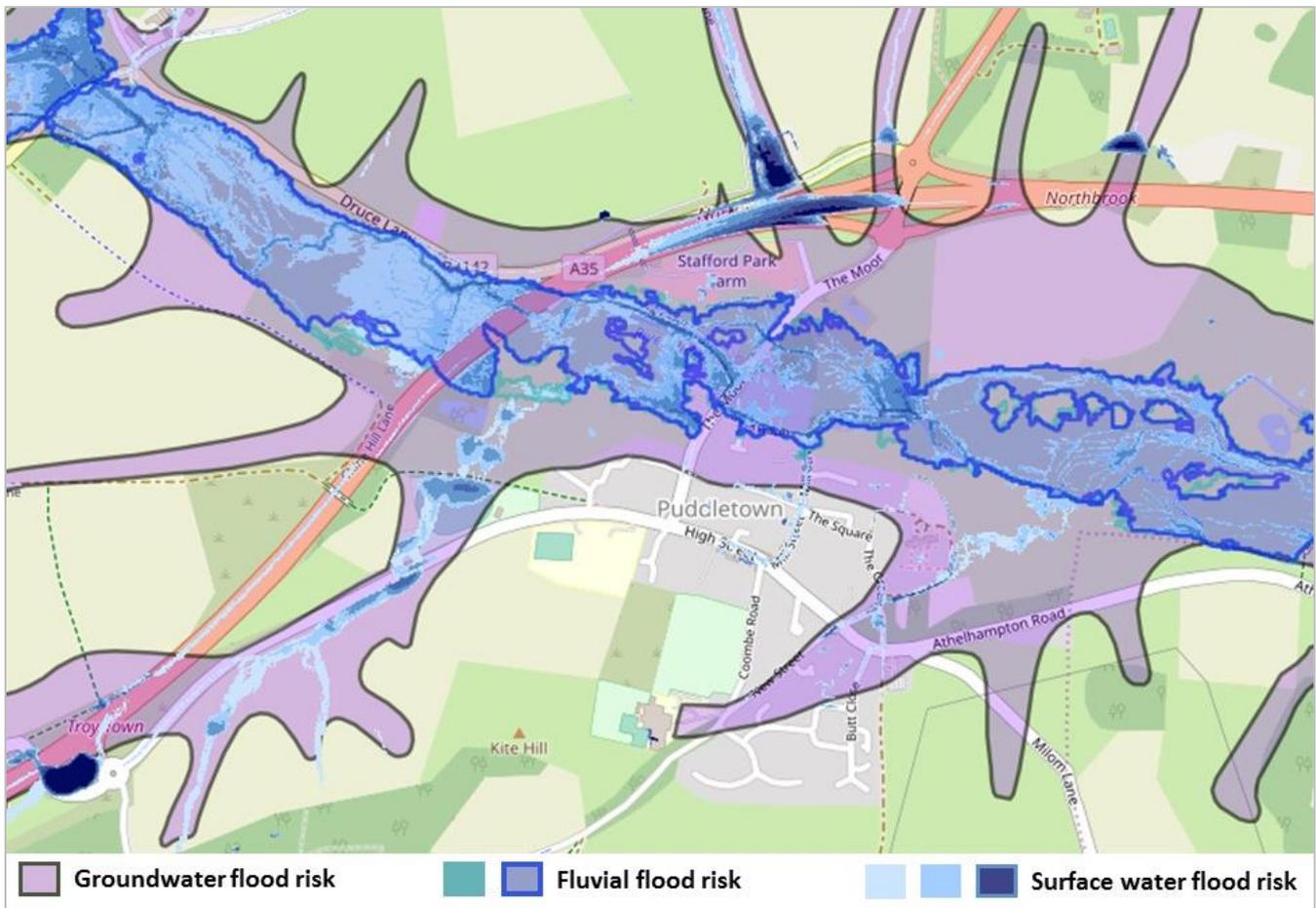
Development must avoid having an adverse effect on the integrity of European and internationally important wildlife sites.

**Project P3.** The Puddletown Area Parish Council and Dorset Council will liaise with Natural England and the Forestry Commission to establish a potential project that would meet the Dorset Heathlands Planning Framework requirements.

### 3.3 Flooding

3.3.1 Being built close to the River Piddle and its watermeadows, it is no surprise that significant areas of land close to the village are at risk of flooding, both when the river overflows (mainly affecting the watermeadows either side of the River, with the extent of flooding traditionally controlled by sluice gates), from rising groundwater levels (which is shown to cover the most extensive area but in reality fluctuates according to the season and recent rainfall rates) and from surface water flows (particularly off the surrounding higher land). The following map indicates those areas that may be at some risk from these sources. The Environment Agency updated its flood risk map for the Piddle Valley in 2019. Dorset Council also keeps records of flood risk from all sources and this too should be checked (and appropriate allowances made for climate change).

Map 5. Strategic Flood Risk Assessment map courtesy of Dorset Council<sup>12</sup>



© Environment Agency © Open Street Map

3.3.2 It is unlikely that anyone would seriously consider developing on the watermeadows. In any event, both national planning policy and the Local Plan are clear that development should avoid the risk of flooding by steering development towards the areas at lowest

<sup>12</sup> <https://explorer.geowessex.com/sfra>

risk, and making sure that development does not exacerbate flooding elsewhere. On this basis, it is clear that any new housing in areas at medium or high risk of flooding would be refused.

3.3.3 As a result, the main flooding issue that is likely to crop up in considering new development (on land in and around the village outside of the watermeadows) is linked to the groundwater levels in the lower lying areas (which has implications for the use and design of soakaways and drainage systems) and the potential to reduce surface water flows that may be running through the site from higher land.



3.3.4 The River Piddle is classified by the Environment Agency as having 'poor' ecological status, therefore it would be a positive measure if any drainage solutions were designed in a manner which also enhanced its ecology.

3.3.5 Ongoing maintenance is also important - landowners are responsible for the maintenance of any waterways flowing through their land, drains and gullies should be kept clear of debris.

3.3.6 Any drainage plan, where required, should assess, and where feasible and appropriate, incorporate, opportunities to reduce the causes and impacts of flooding below current levels. This should include an assessment of the potential for soakaways and other measures to reduce surface water run-off and increase floodwater storage, taking into account the anticipated maximum groundwater levels and soil permeability. It should also set out measures to monitor and ensure the ongoing maintenance and management of the drainage system, and any remedial measures that may be necessary in the event of a systems failure, both on and off-site.

## Policy 8. Flood Risk

New development or intensification of existing uses should avoid flood risk from all sources and must incorporate a viable and deliverable drainage system to manage surface water runoff.

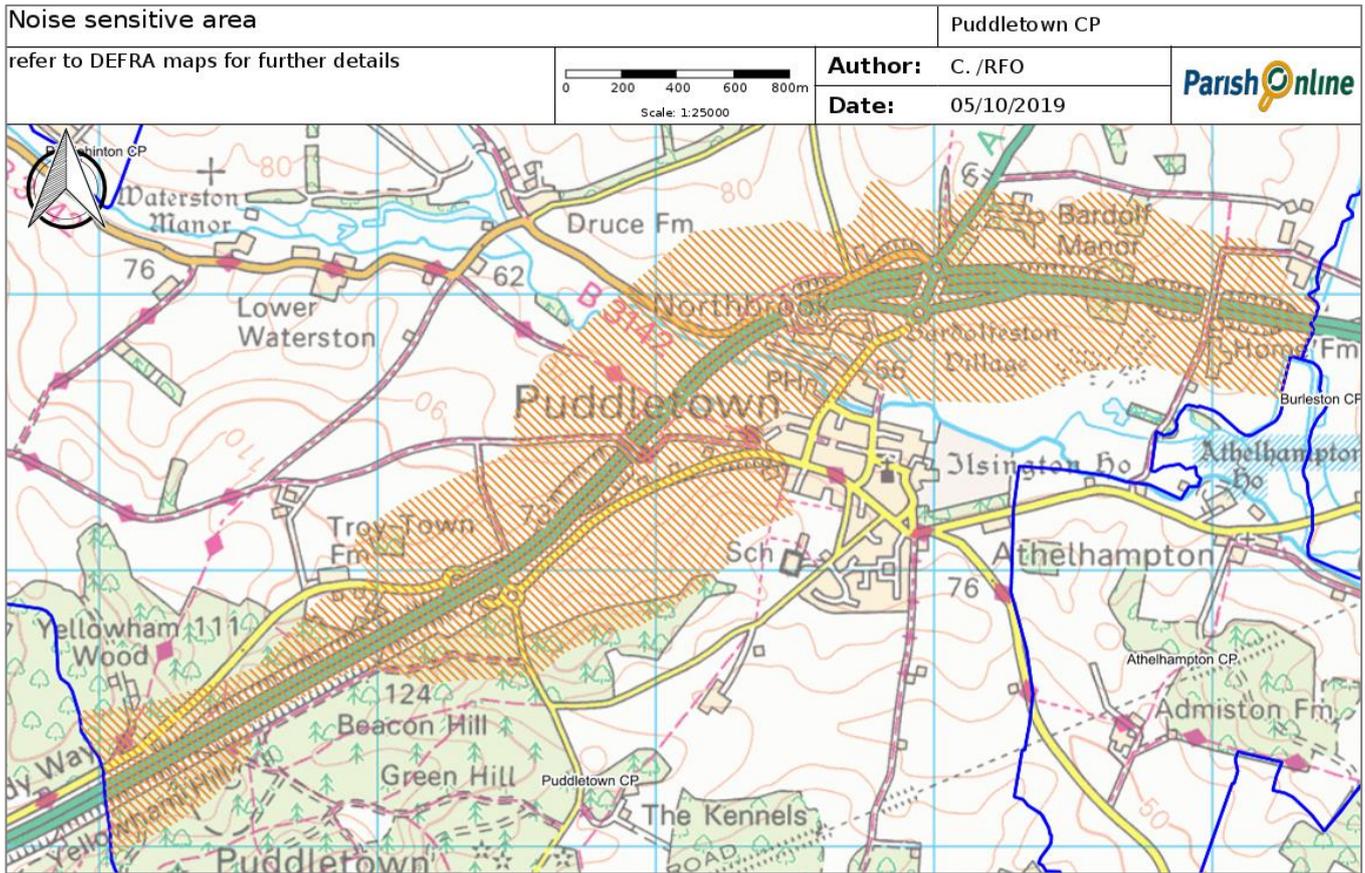
The future maintenance, upgrade or replacement of flood infrastructure must not be adversely affected by development. The design of any measures included in the drainage plan should take into account the desirability of improving the ecological status of the River Piddle.

## 3.4 Noise

3.4.1 Whilst Puddletown is a rural-based community, the background noise from the A35 main road clearly detracts from the area's rural tranquillity.

3.4.2 Noise can become a nuisance when it results in a change of behaviour, and this can become significant when it may cause a material change in behaviour such as keeping windows closed for most of the time, or avoiding outside activities. At the highest extreme, noise can cause genuine health risks, for example through persistent sleep disturbance.

Map 6. Map showing areas where road noise may be a concern



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3.4.3 The latest (2018) World Health Organisation guidelines<sup>13</sup> strongly recommends reducing average noise levels produced by road traffic to below 53 decibels (dB) Lden, as levels above this have been associated with adverse health effects. A lower limit of 45 decibels (dB) Lnight, is proposed for night-time road traffic noise to avoid adverse effects on sleep. Readings taken by the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (DEFRA) show that much of the land within 300m of the main road is impacted by noise levels in excess of 55 decibels (dB) during the day, and above 50 decibels (dB) at night, suggesting that this matter requires serious consideration in planning decisions. Map 6 indicates the approximate area within the parish where these noise levels may be experienced.

3.4.4 The main reason the traffic on the road generates this level of noise is no doubt linked to the

Noise is measured in decibels (dB) – using a logarithmic scale that reflects the sound pressure level. 0dB is the threshold of human hearing, 50dB is around the level of a normal conversation and 120-140dB is the threshold of pain.

Lden (day-evening-night noise level) measure the noise across 24 hours but makes an adjustment for evening and night-time noise.

Lnight covers the ‘night time’ period from 23:00-07:00 hours.

The significant observed adverse level (SOAEL) is the level above which significant adverse effects on health and quality of life.

<sup>13</sup> <https://apps.who.int/iris/handle/10665/279952>

level of traffic on the A35 (which at the last count in 2017 was about 33,000 vehicles on an average day<sup>14</sup>) and the road surface treatment, which uses concrete in part. In the future a different re-surfacing could reduce noise levels, and the Parish Council will continue to press for this as and when opportunities arise through consultations.

**Project P4.** The Parish Council will continue to lobby for noise-reduction measures on the A35 as and when opportunities arise.

3.4.5 However, on the basis that the noise levels from the A35 remain at around their current levels, it is important that a noise assessment is undertaken at the planning application stage in relation to all proposals for residential and other 'noise-sensitive' developments that may be at risk from unacceptable noise levels. This should apply to all such development within the area shown on Map 6, which is based on the recorded noise level maps provided by DEFRA<sup>15</sup>.

3.4.6 The first step in any assessment is to have an accurate understanding of the current noise levels, as they may impact on development. Therefore any readings must be taken at different times of day and night and at the likely height and location of proposed buildings and windows (taking into account that noise levels may be different at upper floor levels if there is less intervening vegetation or other features that may help to muffle sound), as well as garden areas.

3.4.7 Whilst mitigation through design may well be possible, it is important that the measures agreed with the Local Planning Authority are likely to succeed (for example, it would be unreasonable to expect residents to keep their windows closed at night, so the internal layouts may need to ensure that at least one window faces away from the noise source), and do not themselves have adverse impacts (for example, a 3m high noise fence may detract from the local landscape character and may be hard to effectively screen). Highways England have advised that any structures must not be placed on, or require maintenance access to highway land relating to the Strategic Road Network.

3.4.8 A noise assessment will be required to accompany any application for residential or other noise-sensitive developments within the noise sensitive area identified on the Policies Map. The readings taken to inform the assessment must reflect the times and locations (and height above ground level) within the development from where noise from the A35 will be experienced. Mitigation measures must be included where necessary to reduce anticipated noise levels to within the recommended limits as set out in the WHO Environmental noise guidelines for the European Region (2018). Any such measures should not significantly limit the practical enjoyment of the building and its grounds, or have a significant adverse impact on local landscape character or the setting of heritage assets.

## **Policy 9. Noise Assessments**

Noise sensitive development will not be permitted within the area shown as "where road noise may be a concern" on Map 6 without a noise assessment confirming that noise is either below the significant observed adverse effect level or can be mitigated through design or layout.

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<sup>14</sup> <https://roadtraffic.dft.gov.uk/manualcountpoints/46381>

<sup>15</sup> <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/strategic-noise-mapping-2019>

## 4. Housing

**Puddletown will develop its housing stock**, including the development of significant quantities of genuinely affordable housing for local people, at a pace commensurate with the desire to keep the village thriving.

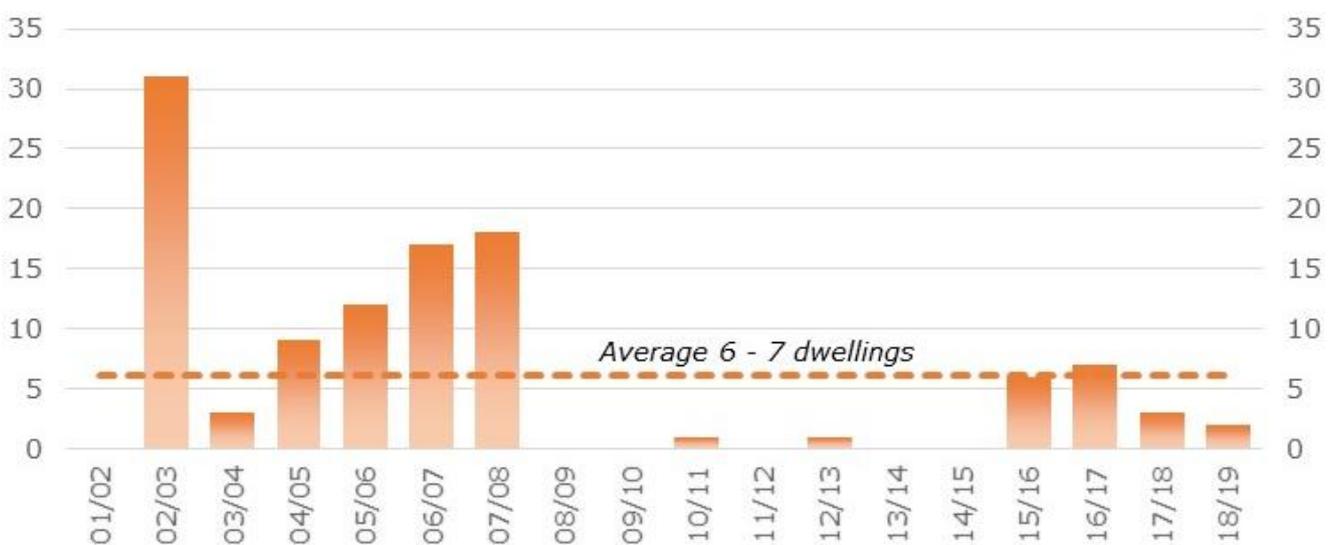
### 4.1 How much housing is needed?

4.1.1 At the time of the last Census (2011) there were 614 households recorded, living in 663 residential properties, in the two parishes of Puddletown and Affpuddle. Between 2011 and 2019 a further 19 homes have been built.

4.1.2 There is no housing target or site allocations for Puddletown in the 2015 Local Plan. However the village does have a defined development boundary, and the Local Plan’s spatial strategy makes clear that “Development opportunities in the more rural areas will be focused primarily at the larger villages, and should take place at an appropriate scale to the size of the village (unless identified as a strategic allocation). It is expected that neighbourhood development plans and other appropriate planning tools will be used to help bring forward new development, and may allocate additional sites, or extend an existing (or add a new) development boundary to help deliver this growth.”

4.1.3 The consultations underpinning this Neighbourhood Plan indicated many residents felt that phased, modest and appropriate development should enhance the village and help maintain its services and vitality. The majority felt that the previous rate of growth (looking back over the last 15 or so years) would be reasonable, but a higher level may not. Based on available housing completions data (dating back to 2001) the general rate of growth has averaged at around 6 to 7 dwellings per year, with some years having significantly more and periods of very little development. This averaged growth rate is broadly equivalent to the proportionate share of the latest Government 2014-based household projections going forward.

*Figure 8. Housing completions by year since 2001*



4.1.4 A Housing Needs Assessment<sup>16</sup> was also commissioned as part of the evidence base for the plan and completed in May 2018. This considered a wide range of factors, including various household projections, likely changes in the population demographic, house sales and prices (including known demand for affordable housing), access to employment and business workforce requirements, as well as past rates of development. The conclusion from this study was that, whilst 7 dwellings a year would reflect a pro-rata level of growth taken from the calculation of housing need for West Dorset suggested by the Ministry for Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) (which is based on household projections and affordability factors), a slightly higher target of 10 dwellings a year would be appropriate, taking into account factors such as the need to boost housing to sustain economic growth and also the fact that the rate of development in Puddletown in recent years has been relatively low (at 2 dwellings per annum).

4.1.5 More recently in October 2018, the review of the Local Plan (preferred options) suggested a formula for calculating the housing targets for Neighbourhood Plan areas, which for areas such as Puddletown would be based on a minimum 5% growth in population over 20 years. This would indicate a much lower housing need target for Puddletown, of around 2 dwellings a year. However this target may change given the decision in June 2019 to now progress the Dorset Local Plan.

4.1.6 Taking all these factors into account, a housing target based on 7 dwellings per year would seem a sensible approach at this time. For the 12 year period from April 2019 – March 2031 this equates to 84 new dwellings in total. As of September 2019, there were 9 sites which had planning permission for a total of 62 houses (as set out in Table 6), which would count towards the supply, leaving a requirement to find land for about 22 more dwellings.

*Table 6. Housing Land Supply (September 2019)*

<b>Ref</b>	<b>Decision</b>	<b>Location</b>	<b>Description</b>	<b>Homes</b>
16/0258	07-Sep-16	Coombe Barn, White Hill	Erect a pair of semi-detached agricultural workers dwellings	2
17/0145	15-Mar-17	The Paddock, Blandford Road	Erect 2 dwellings and associated garages and parking	2
16/0758	24-May-17	Land S of 17-27 High Street	Erect 7 dwellings	7
17/1429	18-Sep-17	Camelot House, Three Lanes End	Demolish existing sheds, erect 5 detached houses (2 affordable)	5
18/2347	30-Nov-18	Manor Buildings, Manor Farm, Waterston Lane	Outline planning application for a rural workers dwelling	1
19/0227	06-Mar-19	Northbrook Farm Units	Change of use of agricultural buildings to 2 houses	2
18/1124	02-Apr-19	Land NW of Three Lanes End	Erect 41 dwellings, public open space and associated works	41

<sup>16</sup> Produced in May 2018 by independent consultants AECOM for the Parish Council - [http://puddletown-ndp.moonfruit.com/download/i/mark\\_dl/u/4013567449/4634573932/Puddletown%20HNA%20Final\[83472\].pdf](http://puddletown-ndp.moonfruit.com/download/i/mark_dl/u/4013567449/4634573932/Puddletown%20HNA%20Final[83472].pdf)

19/0475	01-May-19	Barn at 15 The Moor	Change barn, stable and out-building to form a dwelling	1
19/1303	12-Jul-19	Land adj 2 Styles Lane	Demolish existing garage and outbuildings and erect a dwelling	1
ALL				62

4.1.7 In choosing the sites that we want to allocate in this Plan, we have not used the target of 84 dwellings as an absolute limit. We have taken into account Government Guidance<sup>17</sup> that “A sustainable choice of sites to accommodate housing will provide flexibility if circumstances change, and allows plans to remain up to date over a longer time scale.” Land has therefore been allocated for up to 32 - 34 dwellings. Sites have also been allocated for community facilities (see Section 5). It is also likely that further windfall development may be allowed (for example through conversions).

4.1.8 This means that there is no requirement to release further greenfield sites for open market housing or a need to rely on significant levels of windfall development within the defined settlement boundary before this Plan is reviewed. Any new housing in the countryside should be limited to rural affordable housing exception sites (should the need arise), the conversion of rural buildings, and agricultural and other rural workers dwellings who need to be present on site for their business, in line with the policies in the Local Plan.

4.1.9 Adjustments have been made to the defined development boundary to include these sites (and exclude land that is to be protected from development, such as Local Green Spaces). Community facilities (such as the schools, the surgery and the pub) which are on the edge of the settlement have similarly been kept outside of the defined development boundary, as such uses do not have to be within the boundary and the land should not be considered to have “development value” (as this may inadvertently increase pressure for their use to be relocated). Much of the area in the vicinity on The Moor and Backwater which is within the flood plain has also been excluded from the defined development boundary, given the need to avoid development in areas at risk of flooding.

**Policy 10. The scale and location of new housing development in Puddletown**

Sufficient land is allocated in the Neighbourhood Plan, which should more than meet the projected housing need of about 7 dwellings per annum (averaged) over the plan period. The defined development boundary has been amended (and is as shown on the Policies Map).

Given the identified supply through extant planning consents and site allocations clearly exceeds the housing need requirement, the development of open market housing on alternative greenfield sites outside the defined development boundary, or infill development that does not accord with the other policies in this Neighbourhood Plan, will be restricted.

<sup>17</sup> NPPG Paragraph: 103 Reference ID: 41-103-20190509 <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/neighbourhood-planning--2#evidence-to-support-a-neighbourhood-plan>



## 4.2 What type of homes are needed?

4.2.1 The Housing Needs Assessment also considered the type of housing which would be most appropriate to meet projected needs, concluding that:

- affordable housing need in Puddletown is slightly higher than the average for West Dorset, and home ownership is not affordable for a large proportion of the population of Puddletown, with mortgages particularly difficult for young people to access;
- the vast majority of affordable homes should be provided for social, affordable and intermediate rent, i.e. approximately 80% of the affordable housing requirement;
- smaller homes of one, two and three bedrooms are likely to be most effective in meeting Puddletown's housing needs, both for younger and older people (and to reverse the trend towards quite noticeable increases in relatively large homes from 2001-2011);
- some form of purpose built rented housing – which could be flats – should be encouraged;
- some form of specialist housing for the elderly, such as flats with communal areas that would allow additional services such as care to be provided, or bungalows which may offer those with mobility limitations the best kind of home to meet their needs, should also be encouraged.

### **What do we mean when we talk about 'affordable housing'?**

Affordable housing is defined in national policy as "housing for sale or rent, for those whose needs are not met by the market (including housing that provides a subsidised route to home ownership and/or is for essential local workers)" and can include social rented housing (with rents linked to local wage levels), affordable rented housing (with rents set at least 20% below local markets rents), starter homes (for first time buyers, with an initial cap set on the sale price), discounted market sales (where the price is capped at least 20% below local house prices, and future sales similarly discounted) and other mechanisms such as shared equity.

In Puddletown, our research has shown that some of these affordable housing options, if applied without further restrictions, are not likely to be genuinely affordable to local residents, because of the wide gap between local wage levels and market prices. So when we talk about affordable housing, we primarily mean focusing on social rented homes and larger discounts (than the nominal 20%) to ensure that the homes that are provided as affordable housing as genuinely affordable to local people. This should be set out clearly through planning conditions and/or a legally binding agreement.

4.2.2 This very much aligns with local opinion expressed through the consultations that the main requirement is likely to be for small homes (both as affordable and on the open market). Smaller, affordable and low cost housing will attract young families to live here, and will also suit existing residents looking to get onto the housing ladder or who have limited incomes; some larger family sized homes will mean that growing families can remain in the area, and homes suitable for retired people to downsize to will ensure that older residents can move into housing that is more suited to their time of life.

4.2.3 It is also important that certain controls are put in place to ensure that, as far as possible, the housing that is built addresses the local needs arising from the parish and surrounding rural areas. This reflects both the Local Plan strategy (which aims to focus development at the towns, but recognises that sites may be needed elsewhere to meet local needs) and the wishes of the local community. This can be achieved through placing planning conditions or obligations on any affordable housing provision to ensure that available units are offered to people with a local connection in the first instance. Consideration was also given to whether a restriction on second homes would be appropriate, but given the economic benefits from tourism and relatively low level of second home ownership at present, this has not been taken forward.

It is important that developments will be viable to deliver, and this will depend in part on the mix of homes proposed and also the land values and costs associated with the development. Whilst viability evidence for the Moreton area (submitted as part of the Purbeck Local Plan examination in 2019) suggests that a 40% affordable housing contribution should be viable, 35% is considered reasonable in the Puddletown area to enable more social rented homes to be delivered. Where an applicant considers there are significant economic viability or site constraints that would prevent a mix of housing in accordance with the policy, they should present evidence to clearly demonstrate this as part of their application submission. In such circumstances developers are encouraged to enter into early discussions with the Local Planning Authority to explore alternative options that will still deliver genuinely affordable homes for the Puddletown Neighbourhood Plan area.

**What do we mean when we talk about 'local people' and a 'local connection'?**

'Local people' are those who have a local connection.

'Local connection' is a person satisfies the local connection criteria of the Dorset Housing Allocations Policy.

The criteria shall be applied firstly to those with a connection to the parishes of the Puddletown Area Parish Council (PAPC). The local connection criteria may be extended to the adjoining parishes of Charminster, Cheselbourne, Dewlish, Piddlehinton, Stinsford, Tincleton, West Stafford, West Knighton and Woodsford if there are no people with a local connection to the parishes of the PAPC, and then to the rest of the Dorset Council area.

**Policy 11. House types**

The type and size of housing permitted should provide:

- affordable homes for rent, primarily built as 1 and 2 bedroom dwellings. Where major development involving the provision of housing is proposed, at least 30% of homes should meet this need, and these should be delivered at a genuinely affordable level for the Puddletown Neighbourhood Plan area through social rented options, unless it can be clearly demonstrated that this would not be achievable;
- starter, self-build and shared-ownership affordable homes. Where major development involving the provision of housing is proposed, at least one home (or 5% of the homes, whichever is the greater) should be available for affordable home ownership, and measures included to ensure that they remain so in perpetuity;

- one, two, three and four-bedroom open market homes (including a mix of apartments, semi-detached and terraced properties on any major development sites);
- homes specifically designed for residents with more limited mobility and/or requiring an element of care.

As a result, on sites that can accommodate two or more dwellings, larger homes (with capacity for 4 or more bedrooms) should be limited to no more than a single unit (or not exceed 20% of the open market mix on sites of five or more homes).

The mix of house types may be varied if there is clear evidence that site specific constraints or viability would otherwise prohibit development. Any change to the mix should demonstrate how genuinely affordable homes for the Puddletown Neighbourhood Plan area have been maximised as far as possible.

Where affordable housing is provided, this should be made on the basis of meeting the needs of local people and should be subject to a suitably worded condition or legal agreement to ensure that the housing will remain affordable for local people.

### 4.3 Where will these houses be built?

4.3.1 During the development of the Neighbourhood Plan, landowners were asked to come forward if they wished sites to be considered for possible new development. Independent planning consultants AECOM were commissioned to produce a site assessment report of the eight potential sites identified through this process and additional desk-top checks. From this, five of the sites were considered to have potential. The main findings of the independent site assessment are reproduced in **Appendix 5**. One of those sites (Site 6 at Lanes End) has since been granted full planning permission for 41 dwellings, and has therefore become part of the existing supply.

4.3.2 Those sites considered to “have potential” were then assessed further, taking into account the Plan’s objectives and the environmental objectives identified through Strategic Environmental Assessment. Given the land requirement was for about 22 more dwellings, the land area required could be as little as 1ha (based on the typical densities found across the village and housing need of smaller dwelling types). The results are summarised in **Appendix 6**.

4.3.3 The different pro’s and con’s between the site options means that there is no clear ‘front runner’ and the choice of site allocations considered carefully all the factors and issues identified.

#### ***Land at Athelhampton Road***

4.3.4 Part of the land at Athelhampton Road (Site 1) adjoining Chapel Ground was felt to be the most suitable greenfield site (compared to Pastures Field, where the access issues may prove difficult and impact on the site’s viability, and land off Rod Hill Lane, which if accommodating the same amount of dwellings would be likely to extend further upslope towards the



ridgeline and have a greater adverse impact on the area's rural character).

4.3.5 The development of this site also provides an opportunity to develop a community facility. The landowner has made clear that they will transfer an area of land adjoining the junction with Milom Lane to the community (either the Parish Council or a suitable community trust) to enable the provision of a new community facility (the exact nature to be agreed through further consultation), prior to commencing development. This area could lend itself to a 'landmark' type building or alternatively be landscaped as an open space. The area will extend to at least 0.2ha to enable sufficient parking provision to be included if needed, with the southern and eastern boundaries determined through more detailed design work required for a planning application. The landowner has also indicated a willingness to provide off-site provision of allotment space, for which there is a known need and may well also be used by the occupants of this development (although alternative recreation uses may be considered if a more pressing recreational need is identified). Previous research undertaken by the Local Planning Authority suggests that 600m<sup>2</sup> is the minimum practical size for an area of allotments, and that allotments should be within easy walking distance (1km). This would allow a range of allotment plots from small 10m<sup>2</sup> 'starter' plots for those who are new to allotment gardening, as well as including a number of half-size plots (125m<sup>2</sup>) that would be more suitable for an experienced gardener. A water supply will be needed.

4.3.6 The area required for housing does not have to be excessive to deliver the amount of new homes needed within the plan period (up to 22 dwellings), and therefore the allocated area has been kept to the low-lying land to the north of the line of telegraph poles that cross the field, and broadly within the 64m – 65m contour lines (after which the land begins to rise more steeply). Because this site will be viewed as part of the setting of the Conservation Area and the locally important Old School House (and potentially also relating to the Grade II\* Ilsington Manor on the opposite of Athelhampton Road, should the existing tree screen diminish over time) the design and layout will need to be appropriate to this historic context. Particular points to note are:

- the layout should be organic / natural, so as to be appropriate to an edge of settlement site of this rural village and the historic character of Milom Lane;
- too many detached dwellings which would not be typical of a village setting, the road frontage could perhaps be developed as villas, subdivided into 1 bedroom apartments with communal garden space around each. Parking would need to be sensitively handled. Cottages (semi-detached / terraced) would also be appropriate. The dwellings along Athelhampton Road should face onto the road and reflect the type of relationship seen with the Old School House and other villas. Given the need is on smaller dwellings types, land to the rear of the existing properties could be developed, but the scale of and properties would need to appear ancillary to the existing properties. Barn courtyard / coach-house type development may be appropriate in this location.

4.3.7 Other factors will need to be considered as part of the design and layout. This includes:

- access – vehicle access should be from Athelhampton Road (as Milom Lane has a strong rural character), and designed to help slow traffic along this stretch of road. The junction should not be over-engineered as it needs to respect the semi-rural character of this part of the settlement. Attention should also be paid as to how pedestrian and cyclists will connect into the village and out into the countryside, which is considered further in section 7. In addition a potential off-road link for the Tolpuddle Martyrs Trail (see section 7) should be incorporated;
- drainage - there have been localised flooding problems that are understood to be caused by blockages in the downstream culverts and drains, which will need to be resolved and measures included to ensure any surface water run-off would remain below existing levels;
- biodiversity and landscaping – the main feature of ecological interest is the hedgerow along Milom Lane, and this should be retained, and measures taken to ensure a wildlife corridor runs from this to Little Knoll Copse. Whilst the development is limited to the lower ground, it would make sense from both an ecological and landscape benefit to extend the copse westwards, through hedgerow species and tree planting along the ridge to the south. The development should also be spaced to allow a clear view of Little Knoll Copse from the Athelhampton Road, and provide a landscaped edge to the development, including to the rear of the existing properties so as to reduce the impact of any buildings that may be seen from Athelhampton Road further to the east.

#### **Policy 12. Housing & Community Uses site allocation: Land at Athelhampton Rd**

Land at Athelhampton Road, as shown on the Policies Map, is allocated as a site for housing for about 18 - 22 dwellings, and community uses. The development of this site will be subject to all of the following requirements:

- a) The type and size of dwellings accords with Policy 11, with at least 35% of the homes provided as genuinely affordable dwellings.
- b) An area within the site of at least 0.2ha, located at the junction of Athelhampton Road and Milom Lane, is made available for community use, with the transfer of land to an appropriate community body completed prior to the occupation of the first dwelling. Any building within this area would need to respect the potential inter-relationship with the Grade II\* Ilsington Manor to the north, and the surgery building to the west.
- c) Vehicular access will be provided directly off Athelhampton Road, with the junction designed to create adequate visibility to allow safe access / egress and to help slow traffic entering the village. An off-road east-west link for the Tolpuddle Martyrs Trail should be incorporated within the layout, and financial contributions will be required to improve pedestrian / cycle links into the village, to the satisfaction of the Highway Authority and in line with the aspirations set out in Policy 15.
- d) A drainage plan is secured to manage groundwater and surface water disposal from the site to the satisfaction of the Lead Local Flood Authority, in accordance with Policy 8.

- e) A combined landscape strategy and biodiversity mitigation and enhancement plan is agreed with the Local Planning Authority, in accordance with Policies 2, 3, 6 and 7, that
- retains and where appropriate strengthens the hedgerow along Milom Lane,
  - includes a wildlife corridor and tree planting along the undeveloped ridgeline to the south to Little Knoll Copse, and measures to strengthen the visual links from within the village to Little Knoll Copse, which will provide a backdrop to the development as viewed from Athelhampton Road, and the ridgeline to the south, and
  - provides a new landscaped edge to the eastern boundary to soften the visual impact of the development in views approaching the Conservation Area from the east.
- f) The scale, design and layout of the buildings should respect the character of the village as set out in Policies 3 to 5 and the setting of the Conservation Area, in particular taking into account the prominent nature of this site as viewed from the Athelhampton Road, and
- provides a positive frontage onto Athelhampton Road,
  - is of mixed design and natural, organic layout and form appropriate to the rural setting and nearby undesignated heritage assets, avoiding multiple detached dwellings, executive styling and uniform placement and orientation of buildings and streets.
  - buildings are kept below the 64m contour, or if to the rear of the existing development along Athelhampton Road, are of a scale and size that is ancillary to those dwellings.
  - the layout and spacing allows for views from within the village to Little Knoll Copse and the ridgeline to the south.
- g) An area of land of at least 600m<sup>2</sup> is provided for allotments (or for an alternative recreational use in agreement with the Parish Council) in a suitable location within easy walking distance (1km) of the site.
- h) Any net new residential development will need to avoid giving rise to any adverse impacts on the integrity of Poole Harbour (a European site);
- i) A comprehensive heritage strategy is agreed with the Local Planning Authority, in accordance with Policy 4, that:
- assesses the significance of all heritage assets potentially affected by the development, including any contribution made by their setting;
  - demonstrates how significance will be taken into account in the design process, i.e. how harm to heritage assets has been avoided or minimised; and
  - identifies any opportunities to enhance or better reveal the significance of any heritage assets.

### **Northbrook Farm**

4.3.8 Ultimately, the opportunity to develop underused farm buildings (at Northbrook Farm – part of Site 8) was considered to tip the balance in favour of its development, despite its distance from the centre of the village. The development of this site also provides an opportunity to provide public open space in this part of the village, which can be designed to help provide a safer pedestrian / cycle link into the village. The landowner has made it clear that they will arrange for the transfer of the area land between the site and Druce Lane to the community (either the Parish Council or a suitable community trust) as part of the site's development.



4.3.9 The Conservation Officer has advised that the remaining elements of the Threshing Barn within the site is of historic interest (this has been added to the list in Table 3, but may, subject to further research, be considered Listed as part of the curtilage of Stafford Park Farm House). The Stables (which are outside of the proposed allocation, and were granted prior approval for conversion to 2 dwellings in 2019) are of similar historic interest. The 1901 Ordnance Survey map shows these as being in existence at the turn of the 20th century, when the Threshing Barn was part of a larger courtyard complex which formed the western boundary of the walled garden to the farmhouse. Taking into account the historic layout of the site, and discussions with the Conservation Officer, a potential layout could potentially comprise:

- re-use of the Threshing Barn (with the unsympathetic extensions removed);
- a single storey barn style development to the south side of the Threshing Barn (reflecting the historic pattern of development here);
- a row (terrace) of cottages along the track similar to that found further to the west;
- a courtyard form of development to North-West corner of the site, with the building designed to effectively screen noise to living areas and internal courtyard space.

4.3.10 Parking would need to be carefully considered, and may need to be an integral part of the buildings (such as attached car barns).

4.3.11 The other key issue for this site is its proximity to the A35 (and therefore the potential noise levels). Provided that the noise levels can be adequately mitigated without the need to encroach onto highway land relating to the Strategic Road Network, and an appropriate layout devised to respect the historic interest of the site and its relationship to Stafford Park Farm, the site should be able to deliver about 8 - 10 dwellings, in addition to the two dwellings already approved through the conversion of the Stables at the entrance to the site. The provision of some affordable housing on this site is important given the local housing needs (and at over 0.5ha the site would be considered 'major' development), although it is accepted that some flexibility may be needed if this impacts on the scheme's viability.

4.3.12 Highways England will also need to be consulted on any detailed proposals this close to their highway land, including suggested site drainage arrangements (as any run-off should not connect into their highway drainage system).

### **Policy 13. Housing allocation: Northbrook Farm**

Land at Northbrook Farm, as shown on the Policies Map, is allocated for housing, including some affordable homes, with public open space connecting to Druce Lane to the south. Its development will be subject to all of the following requirements:

- a) A bat and barn owl survey is undertaken of the existing buildings and measures secured to ensure that there is a net gain in their habitat, and mitigation secured in accordance with Policies 6 and 7.
- b) A noise assessment is undertaken and a mitigation strategy agreed with the Local Planning Authority in consultation with Highways England, and in accordance with Policy 9.
- c) A drainage plan is secured to manage groundwater and surface water disposal from the site without discharge to the A35 highway drainage system, and in accordance with Policy 8.
- d) The Threshing Barn is retained (and sympathetically converted) and its unsympathetic extensions and large modern agricultural buildings removed, and measures are taken to ensure that any evidence of potential contamination before or during construction are investigated and remediation agreed by the Local Planning Authority.
- e) The area of land to the south (and as shown on the Policies Map) is provided as public open space, a management plan secured to increase its biodiversity value, and an all-weather off-road pedestrian access is created across this open space to link to Druce Lane, prior to the occupation of the first dwelling.
- f) The type and size of dwellings accords with Policy 11, with at least 35% of the homes provided as genuinely affordable dwellings.
- g) The site's layout and detailed design is heritage-led, accords with Policies 2 to 5, and is subsidiary to, and respects the setting of, Stafford Park Farm (a Grade II Listed Building) the historic Stable block (to the south) and Threshing Barn.
- h) Any net new residential development will need to avoid giving rise to any adverse impacts on the integrity of Poole Harbour (a European site);
- i) A comprehensive heritage strategy is agreed with the Local Planning Authority, in accordance with Policy 4, that:
  - assesses the significance of all heritage assets potentially affected by the development, including any contribution made by their setting;
  - demonstrates how significance will be taken into account in the design process, i.e. how harm to heritage assets has been avoided or minimised; and
  - identifies any opportunities to enhance or better reveal the significance of any heritage assets.

## 5. Community facilities and other infrastructure

### **Puddletown will maintain and improve opportunities for social interaction**

within the village, addressing all age groups, to create a safe, secure and welcoming environment, and enhanced community spaces, and **ensure that infrastructure is planned** to meet the needs at the heart of our community, including but not limited to, schools, doctors, vets, broadband, bus services, children's play areas and a shop, post office and pub.

### 5.1 What Puddletown has to offer

5.1.1 In the 21st century, the village of Puddletown is a friendly and lively place to live and visit. Many regular activities are based in its largest buildings, including St Mary's Church and church room, the Village Hall and adjoining Community Library, the Sports Pavilion at the Recreation Park, the Blue Vinny Pub and the Lower and Middle schools. There are groups meeting regularly, such as the Lunch Club and the young mums' group (Pumpkins), as well as a monthly community pop-up cafe. The Recreation Ground with its Pavilion hosts clubs for footballers and cricketers as well as a much used Play Park (built and managed as a community project). In the summer, Puddletown, has had (on occasion) a Village Fayre in The Square and in alternate years a very popular Open Gardens Weekend, both of which attract visitors from inside and outside the village. Music is a particular strength in the village with various concerts being held in the church and Middle School, including the local Hand Bell Ringers and visiting choirs. Both the church and the pub feature carol singing at Christmas and in February 2018 the first Puddletown pantomime was produced, directed and performed by local people. There are also very active (male and female) cricket and football teams.

5.1.2 There are also many locally used services, including the village shop, post office, pub, surgery, veterinary practice, pre-school, first and middle schools as well as other local businesses and organisations. For other facilities and services most residents look to Dorchester, for example for the upper school, and sports such as swimming, bowls, tennis etc. In this respect, the local bus services (currently the X12 and 187) are also important, as these provide convenient access into the town<sup>18</sup> for those without a car or able to cycle. The rugby club use the local pitches in nearby Piddlehinton.



### 5.2 The impact of development on our community facilities and services

5.2.1 As the population of Puddletown grows there is a need to ensure that the community facilities and local services required to support our community are available. For

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<sup>18</sup> the X12 runs every approximately 2 hours from 8am to 4pm into Dorchester and onto Weymouth, with the last bus returning leaving Dorchester just before 6pm, including Saturdays but not Sundays, and a similar service to Dorchester also provided by the 187 – for more details see <https://www.damory.co.uk/timetables/>

example, Dorset Council (as the Education Authority) estimate that a typical development of 25 dwellings will generate a total of 9 children across the First, Middle and Upper School phases, which in turn will impact on local schools if there is insufficient capacity. In 2019 the Village Hall and the Church Room were both heavily booked – indicating that they may not be able to accommodate additional activities if the need arose. Similarly, local utility companies may also need to make plans to improve their services if they would not otherwise have capacity.

5.2.2 Areas of particular interest for improvement and / or development identified through the making of this plan include:

*Table 7. Community Infrastructure – Identified Needs*

<p>More / improved community venues that offer space for community activity that target all age groups and encourage inter-age interaction</p>	<p>A new fit-for-purpose kitchen is required in the current Village Hall (at an estimated cost of up to £20,000). The carpet tiles also need to be replaced, and more storage space is needed for materials.</p> <p>The kitchen area in the Sports Pavilion needs refurbishment (at an estimated cost of £9,000).</p> <p>A suitable base is needed for a Community Café – one option could be to expand the Sports Pavilion.</p> <p>If the swimming pool at the Middle School (which was refurbished in 2018/19) was covered (at an estimated cost of £50,000), this would increase its use (both by the children, and could also allow Puddletown parishioners the opportunity to use the pool outside of school hours, assuming life guards could be found).</p>
<p>A wider choice of convenient public open spaces for sports and recreation</p>	<p>The continued development and improvement of the sports and recreation facilities at the Puddletown Recreation Ground. The cricket pitch artificial pitch needs to be upgraded (which will require the realignment of the bridleway to the north) (at a total estimated cost of £17,000). There are also plans to have a Skate Park, which requires funding support.</p> <p>Improvements to the quality and offer of the play area on Butt Close and public access to The Green.</p> <p>The provision of new allotments or a public orchard.</p> <p>The provision of space designed for dog walkers.</p>
<p>Sufficient burial spaces</p>	<p>An extension to the cemetery, which could be provided by making an opening in the wall in the current churchyard and making the adjoining land suitable for burials.</p>
<p>Capacity within the local school system to provide the best quality education</p>	<p>The extension of the Middle School (Dorset Council own land immediately adjoining the school which they have reserved for this purpose).</p> <p><i>The capacity of the First School will also need to be kept under review, as in 2019/20 it was broadly at capacity, although there were pupil spaces in the early years, and in the wider catchment.</i></p>

5.2.3 The land reserved for the future extension of the Middle School Grounds, due to its size and position on the edge of the settlement, will need to be accompanied by a landscape strategy and biodiversity mitigation and enhancement plan. This is likely to require the retention of the existing planting belt along the western edge of the site as far as practical. Careful consideration will also need to be given to the impact of increased vehicular trips given the narrow nature of the existing roads accessing the school site. A transport assessment should be undertaken to fully understand the impact and identify appropriate mitigation. Dorset Council have indicated that they are giving consideration to the provision of a new access road specifically linked to the school, to remove the need for coaches and taxis to continue to use New Street and Coombe Road as part of any future expansion. The alignment of such a route need not encroach unduly into open countryside, and could potentially run close to the current village boundary to the west of the school. However much more work is needed to establish the feasibility of such a solution.

5.2.4 Whilst the surgery recognised that further housing in the area could lead to more pressure on the practice, there is scope within the existing site to cater for additional staffing and several alternative practices in the area that also take patients from Puddletown (and vice versa).

5.2.5 Whilst further improvements to the frequency and routing of the local bus is largely outside the ability of the Neighbourhood Plan to deliver, the provision of bus stops at convenient locations and travel information packs for new residents can potentially be secured through planning.

5.2.6 Similarly, basic utility services such as for water and sewage, and mains electric, are rarely an issue for development provided that it is possible for a connection to be made. Discussion with Wessex Water have highlighted that, whilst the sewer networks have limited capacity, once allocations are made in the Neighbourhood Plan, Wessex Water should be able to design and construct any necessary improvements to accommodate the anticipated level of growth, and will look to ensure that the works are programmed to match the rate of development.

5.2.7 Superfast broadband is available for the village, and building regulations now require that homes are designed to allow copper or fibre-optic cables or wireless devices capable of delivering broadband speeds greater than 30 Mbps to be installed. Whilst 4G mobile phone coverage is generally available on most networks (although indoor reception can vary), further improvements are not something that the Neighbourhood Plan can readily influence.

#### **Policy 14. Supporting Community Facilities and Local Services**

Development proposals to improve the provision of community facilities (including those listed below) in a manner in keeping with the character of the area and supporting opportunities for social interaction for all age groups, will be supported.

CF1. Blue Vinny Public House

CF2. Londis Village Shop and Post Office

CF3. Piddle Valley Vets - Veterinary Surgery

CF4. Puddletown Pre School (located within the Puddletown First School building)

- CF5. Puddletown C.E. V.C. First School
- CF6. Puddletown Recreation Ground and Sports Pavilion
- CF7. Puddletown Surgery
- CF8. Puddletown Village Hall and Library
- CF9. St Mary's C.E. Middle School
- CF10. St Mary's Parish Church, Meeting Room and Cemetery
- CF11. Rod Hill meeting room

Improvements should include:

- a) The expansion of the cemetery on land to the south side of the existing cemetery (for which land is reserved, as shown on the Policies Map);
- b) The expansion of the Middle School grounds on land to the north-west of the school (for which land is reserved, as shown on the Policies Map). A combined landscape strategy and biodiversity mitigation and enhancement plan for this development will need to be agreed with the Local Planning Authority, in accordance with Policies 6 and 7, together with an assessment and mitigation of the likely increase in vehicular traffic as required under Policy 15;
- c) A new community facility, public open space and allotments in association with the development of Land at Athelhampton Road (under Policy 12);
- d) Land (public open space) for informal recreation to the south of Northbrook Farm, to be provided in association with that development (under Policy 13).

Developer contributions may be sought where reasonable and necessary (and not likely to be delivered through the Community Infrastructure Levy) for improvements to the community facilities as identified in Table 7.

Every effort should be made to work with the local community and relevant authorities to investigate potential solutions to avoid any loss of these valued assets.



## 6. Business, employment and tourism

**Encourage new, and support existing, businesses and services** in order to increase local job opportunities. This may include an increase in the number of shops and services and help improve social opportunities for villagers, and an increase in tourism opportunities based on the area's unique history and character, but without harming the environment.

6.1.1 Historically, Puddletown had a variety of economic activity, with employment related to Ilsington House, other domestic work, a forge, sawmill, coal yard, a small malthouse and a number of farms within or adjacent to the village. In the mid-C19 there were five public houses, seven shopkeepers, three blacksmiths and a combined saddler and harness maker.<sup>19</sup>

6.1.2 At the time of the last Census (2011), around half of the local population were in some form of full or part-time employment, but most (about 70%) commuted over 5km to work or travel for their job (ie outside of the parish). The data suggests that Dorchester (and to a much lesser extent, Weymouth and Blandford Forum) is the main place of work for about 40% of the working population, with a further 15% travelling on to places such as Portland and the Poole / Bournemouth conurbation, and just under 10% having no fixed place of work. About 20% of the working population were based at home, the remaining 10% working in local jobs (for example, in the Puddletown schools and surgery). Whilst data from the annual Business Register and Employment Survey is not available at a parish level, the data available at ward level would suggest that there are far fewer jobs than local employment opportunities (with about 1,240 working or actively seeking work according to the 2011 Census, and only about 500 jobs held by employees in the period 2015-2018). All of this would indicate that increasing employment opportunities locally would be a positive action to reduce commuting - however, this will only be achieved if businesses wish to locate here, and there are opportunities for them to do so.

6.1.3 The main employment sectors within the parish (based on the same data sources) would appear to be education, arts / entertainment / recreation services and retail. In addition to the community facilities (such as the village shop and local pub) there are a number of other small business premises in the village (the Antique Map and Book shop, and D H Autos repair unit being two examples). There are a number of small industrial units at Duck Farm, about 3km south-west of the village on Ilsington Road, as well as a number of self-catering holiday units. Contact was made with a number of these businesses to establish whether they were looking to expand, or indeed whether there were any other indications of an obvious shortfall in supply. Two local businesses were looking to relocate to larger premises (one had already identified a suitable premises elsewhere, the other was dependent on finding a unit at a suitable rent level). The workshop at Ilsington Farm was marketed as available to lease in July 2019, but at the time of drafting had not been re-occupied.

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<sup>19</sup> Information taken from the 2007 Conservation Area Appraisal

6.1.4 Landowners raised concerns about whether the provision of business units on their sites would be taken up. This may well relate to the lack of interest in the B1 business unit at The Moor, which was constructed and then marketed for approximately 2 years (2012-2014) before it was converted into dwellings due to the lack of interest at that time, and difficulties of accommodating some business types within or close to residential areas.

6.1.5 The adopted Local Plan does support opportunities for businesses to set up and expand:

- through the intensification or extension of existing premises;
- within or on the edge of a settlement with a defined development boundary;
- through the re-use of an existing building in rural areas;
- as part of a farm diversification scheme;
- where a rural location is essential for the type of business proposed.

6.1.6 There are similar criteria for small-scale built tourist accommodation (such as guesthouses and self-catering establishments). Proposals for live-work developments are also supported in locations considered suitable for residential development, and local support (as shown from the household survey) for small-scale, flexible business premises and home office working.

6.1.7 On this basis, no specific policies or site allocations for new employment workspace or additional visitor facilities have been included in this plan. However if a clear need is identified in the future that is not addressed through the overarching policies, this can be reviewed. A project has been included to promote tourism through raising awareness of the Thomas Hardy links to the area (and Tolpuddle Martyrs) – see section 2.5 – which will link with the following project.

**Project P5.** The Parish Council will work with local groups and organisations to develop and promote material, including maps, leaflets and web sites, to advertise the tourism opportunities, accommodation, local shops and businesses within Puddletown and the surrounding area.



## 7. Transport and Traffic

**Puddletown will be a well-connected and pedestrian safe village**, with public footpaths, bridleways and cycle ways designed to provide a choice of inter-connecting routes within the village and beyond, and roads designed to ensure that traffic speed is maintained at a safe level and there is sufficient public and private car parking to avoid associated parking problems.

### *Roads and safe routes for pedestrians, cyclists and horse riders*

7.1.1 Traffic and safety on the local roads are a concern for residents of Puddletown. The two main routes through the village – the High Street and, to a lesser extent, Blandford Road – have significant levels of traffic, particularly at school drop-off and pick-up times when there are a number of large school buses that travel in from the surrounding villages. At these times the parking along the High Street (particularly outside the shop) can add to the sense of congestion as there is insufficient room for vehicles to pass because of the parked cars. There is a local understanding that New Street and Coombe Road operate as a 'one way' system at these times, as they are too narrow to allow two vehicles to pass. Even so, the buses often have to reverse and turn in Butt Close.

7.1.2 Parked cars can also reduce visibility for vehicles exiting from the side roads – this is particularly noticeable by The Green where there are a number of junctions in close proximity, and by the First School (not helped by parents who park their cars on the double yellow lines, in dedicated bus stops, as well as in Greenacres and along Three Lanes End). The parking situation in the housing estates around Butt Close and Beech Road is also of growing concern where the increasing number of vehicles parking on the road can occasionally block the passage of larger vehicles, including waste collection and emergency services. Whilst many properties have dedicated parking areas, there are either insufficient spaces or the spaces are not conveniently located to people's homes to use. These problems can be exacerbated further by the impact of construction traffic on the surrounding highway network.



7.1.3 Speeding is also a local issue – the parish minutes record a survey in November 2013 that showed 2 in 5 drivers travelling in excess of 35mph (and the average speed throughout the week was just over 34mph). In 2019 a decision was taken to establish a Community Speedwatch, following on from the installation of a mobile Speed Indication Device (shared between Puddletown and Tolpuddle). In October 2019 this recorded 1 in 4 drivers entering Puddletown from along Athelhampton Road as travelling in excess of 34mph (and about 1 in 10 at speeds

in excess of 37mph) – showing a degree of success but clearly indicating that traffic speeds are still an issue.

7.1.4 Thankfully in the last 5 years (2014-2019<sup>20</sup>), away from the A35 there have been very few road traffic accidents in the parish (or at least very few that are serious enough to have been reported). There have been a number of mainly minor collisions recorded on the rural lanes of the parish – although at the time of drafting this Plan there had been reports of a serious collision involving a motorbike and a tractor in Long Lane by the junction with Druce Lane<sup>21</sup> – and only one serious collision recorded in the village itself (on the Moor close to the junction with Backwater – where visibility for vehicles exiting Backwater can be poor when vehicles park just after the bridge on the Blandford Road).



7.1.5 Whilst there are limited things that a Neighbourhood Plan can do to address traffic and road safety problems, it can help highlight local highway issues that should be considered in transport assessments, look at projects to help reduce the known issues (initial proposals are set out below in Table 8), and promote the use of safe routes through and around the village for pedestrians, cyclists and horse riders, that join up to make a comprehensive network. We call this 'interconnectivity'. There are examples around the village where pockets of development have not 'joined up' (a prime example being the lack of a direct publicly accessible pedestrian link between Greenacres and Thompson Close, which could easily have been provided and offered a more pedestrian-friendly route than walking along the main roads). It is important that developers and planners learn from these mistakes so that they are not repeated in the future. Potential onward connections should be clearly shown on the site layout plans, and the publicly accessible routes through any development (and ongoing maintenance arrangements) secured by condition or legal agreement.



7.1.6 Routes for new footpaths / bridleways are also indicated on the Policies Map, but the actual alignment would be subject to negotiation with the appropriate landowners. Whilst these may be aspirational, they

would be of real benefit to local residents, improving access to the countryside through the ability to go on circular walks / rides of varying lengths, without needing to travel further afield. Such routes are likely to require funds, not only for suitable gates and signage, but also fencing / hedging and other measures to ensure that increased public access will not interfere with farming activities. Additional routes and improvement may be considered through a future review of this Plan.

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<sup>20</sup> as recorded by the Police and reported on <https://www.dorsetcouncil.gov.uk/roads-highways-maintenance/road-safety/road-traffic-collision-map.aspx>

<sup>21</sup> <https://www.bournemouthcho.co.uk/news/17918451.biker-airlifted-crash-tractor-puddletown/>



<p>West entrance, road from the High Street to the Troytown Roundabout</p>	<p>The 30mph zone needs to be extended westwards and the gateway / entrance itself and 30mph zone needs clearer signage to encourage slower speeds, and a SID (speed indication device). A pedestrian pathway needs to be constructed from the Recreation Area car park to the First School either along the north side of the road, or along the bridleway to the north of the Recreation Area. In addition a 'lollipop lady' or a pedestrian crossing needs to be implemented where the road narrows in front of the First School.</p>
<p>North entrance, Blandford Road and the Moor</p>	<p>Clearer signage at the entrance of the village highlighting the start of the 30mph zone to encourage slower speeds, a second SID facing north at The Moor before the Backwater junction. Measures should also be taken to reduce parking immediately north of the Backwater junctions. A pedestrian crossing phase should be introduced at the traffic light controlled junction with High Street, to enable schoolchildren from the northern part of the village cross to the road safely to get to the First School.</p>
<p>New Footpaths / Bridleways</p>	<p><b>Southern route:</b> connecting the Rodhill footpath / bridleway heading south alongside Butt Close and the Coombe, to provide alternative routes to the doctor's surgery and Middle School, and complete the circular route for the southern half of the village.</p> <p><b>North-western link:</b> connecting from Three Lanes (through the planned new estate), across the Moor and joining Blandford Road just south of the Blue Vinny, to provide alternative routes to the First School, Recreation Park and village pub, and complete the circular route for the north western portion of the village.</p> <p><b>North-eastern link:</b> from the junction of Mill Street and the Backwater, and heading east, then south east to exit onto the Athelhampton Road, a more recreation-focussed route that would provide people with wonderful views of the meadowland and river landscapes in this area, and complete the circular walk for the north eastern portion of the village. Whilst outside of the Neighbourhood Plan area, a connection onwards along the Athelhampton Road, terminating at Athelhampton would provide access to a wide range of footpaths and bridleways originating at Athelhampton.</p> <p><b>Tolpuddle Martyr's Trail:</b> a route linking through from the Old Chapel in Tolpuddle to Shire Hall in Dorchester via Puddletown. Whilst this cannot be the exact route that the Martyrs would have taken (the old A35 trunk road in places remains too heavily trafficked to be an appropriate route), the concept is to use the public rights of way that, in the main, follow the ancient routes, and negotiate off-road links with landowners where no such routes exist.</p>

### **Public transport and alternatives**

7.1.8 Whilst bus services have been greatly reduced across Dorset in recent years (including the service into the Poole / Bournemouth conurbation which was axed in 2014), Puddletown still benefits from a reasonably good 2-hourly service into Dorchester. The

Dorchester service (via the X12 and also supplemented by the 187), runs during the week and on Saturdays (but there is no service on Sundays or into the evenings). This means people should be able to travel to work and shop in Dorchester, as well as access the hospital and other facilities found there. But for those who have no access to a car (which was about 1 in 10 households in 2011) it limits access to job opportunities outside the county town, and also limits access to leisure and recreation facilities that are typically used outside of normal working hours, and to some community facilities (such as the larger hospitals in Poole / Bournemouth).

**Project P6.** The Parish Council will work with the Highways Authority and local bus providers to identify initiatives that improve public transport connecting Puddletown to other transport networks and to nearby villages and large towns - this could include investigating the use of 'empty' school buses; the implementation of community bus schemes and/or demand responsive transport schemes.

7.1.9 Without reasonable alternatives, people are going to rely more heavily on private cars, so it comes as no great surprise that in 2011 about half of all households in the parish owned 2 or more cars (47% locally, compared to under 30% nationally and in towns such as Dorchester). With the decreasing bus service since 2011 the average number of cars in each household may well have risen further. Trips by private car is the least sustainable travel option, and more cars also means more localised parking problems, such as those noted above.

7.1.10 At the current time, the county parking standards (based on car ownership levels estimated from the 2001 Census) suggest that on smaller sites, the number of spaces should be based on the following guidelines:

- 1 bedroom = 1 space
- 2 bedrooms = 1 - 2 spaces
- 3 bedrooms = 2 spaces
- 4 bedrooms = 2 - 3 spaces

plus at least 1 visitor space (which may be shared with up to 5 dwellings). In reality, car ownership levels are now higher than those predicted when the guidance was drawn up, and as such dwellings with 2 or more bedrooms should ideally aim to have at least 2 car parking spaces in addition to visitor spaces, particularly where there is limited scope for on-road parking.

7.1.11 The only other practical alternative to get into Dorchester (for those fit and able) is to cycle in, as the town centre is about 7 miles (40 minutes) by bicycle. There is an advisory cycle route up White Hill, turning south at Beacon Corner to join Ilsington Road and then east as far as Lower Bockhampton where the route goes south again to join the West Stafford Road into Dorchester (and there is a shared off-road route at this point).



### **Policy 15. Creating safer roads and pedestrian / cycle routes**

Where development has the potential to connect via new or existing public rights of way to more than one road, publicly accessible pedestrian (and where feasible, cycle-friendly) routes should be provided through the development, so that more people are likely to walk rather than drive around the village. In particular, the provision of the pedestrian route connections identified in Table 8 (and as shown on the Policies Map) will be encouraged, and their future provision should not be compromised by development. The design of any such paths should:

- be suitable for use of people with mobility difficulties, wheelchairs or buggies;
- be suitably overlooked, landscaped and sign-posted so as to be safe and attractive;
- enable reasonably direct links to nearby community facilities; and
- allow for future onwards connections where there is reasonable prospect that an adjoining site may be developed.

Development that would adversely impact on the safe pedestrian use of the quiet lanes around the village (as shown on the Policies Map) and the safe use of the advisory cycle route into Dorchester will not be supported.

Where development would give rise to increased pedestrian movements within and around the village, proportionate developer contributions should be sought for improvements to the highway infrastructure and pedestrian routes identified in Table 8.

For major developments likely to generate a significant amount of construction traffic travelling through the village, a construction traffic management plan should be agreed with the Local Planning Authority in consultation with the Parish Council.

### **Policy 16. Parking Provision**

Parking provision should meet the county car parking guidelines. The design and location should be convenient to the premises it is intended to serve (to avoid giving rise to poor parking on the highways and to promote the ease of use of electric vehicle charging points), avoid reliance on in-line provision (spaces end to end in a line or in front of a garage which creates a blocking effect that renders this layout less flexible and the parking spaces less effective), and be suitably landscaped with areas of planting to soften the impact of cars within the street scene.

Proposals that include new or extended public parking facilities to serve the main community facilities are encouraged.



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### Appendix 2: Project list

**Project P1.** The Puddletown Area Parish Council and Dorset Council will continue to liaise with the Forestry Commission and local police to ensure good, clear access to and public safety in the environs of Forest.

**Project P2.** The Parish Council will work with the National Trust and other interested parties to promote greater understanding of the Thomas Hardy and Tolpuddle Martyr connections to the area, for example through the production of a visitor information brochure and negotiating and waymarking a Martyr’s Trail from Tolpuddle to Shire Hall.

**Project P3.** The Puddletown Area Parish Council and Dorset Council will liaise with Natural England and the Forestry Commission to establish a potential project that would meet the Dorset Heathlands Planning Framework requirements.

**Project P4.** The Parish Council will continue to lobby for noise-reduction measures on the A35 as and when opportunities arise.

**Project P5.** The Parish Council will work with local groups and organisations to develop and promote material, including maps, leaflets and web sites, to advertise the tourism opportunities, accommodation, local shops and businesses within Puddletown and the surrounding area.

**Project P6.** The Parish Council will work with the Highways Authority and local bus providers to identify initiatives that improve public transport connecting Puddletown to other transport networks and to nearby villages and large towns - this could include investigating the use of 'empty' school buses; the implementation of community bus schemes and/or demand responsive transport schemes.

## Appendix 3: Supporting document list

Area Profile for Puddletown & Athelhampton

<https://apps.geowessex.com/stats/AreaProfiles/Parish/puddletown-and-athelhampton>

Basic Conditions Statement, March 2020, prepared for Puddletown Parish Council by Dorset Planning Consultant Limited

Bournemouth, Dorset and Poole Workspace Strategy, October 2016, Dorset Councils

<https://www.dorsetcouncil.gov.uk/planning-buildings-land/planning-policy/joint-planning-policy-work/pdfs/workspace/bournemouth-dorset-and-poole-workspace-strategy-2016.pdf>

Consultation Statement, May 2020, Puddletown Neighbourhood Plan Group

Dark Skies Map, CPRE <http://nightblight.cpre.org.uk/maps/>

Dorset Explorer mapped constraints, Dorset Council <https://explorer.geowessex.com/>

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[http://www.puddletownareaparishcouncil.co.uk/\\_UserFiles/Files/Neighbourhood%20Plan/Site%20Assessment%20Report%20December%202018%20Appendix.pdf](http://www.puddletownareaparishcouncil.co.uk/_UserFiles/Files/Neighbourhood%20Plan/Site%20Assessment%20Report%20December%202018%20Appendix.pdf)

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## Appendix 4: Listed Buildings in the Neighbourhood Plan area

<b>Location</b>	<b>Grade</b>	<b>List No.</b>
Puddletown Primary School, 38, High Street	II	1119073
5, High Street	II	1119074
9, High Street	II	1119075
Cobblers, 11, High Street	II	1119076
Nos 17 to 25 (odd nos) including front boundary railings, 17-25, High Street	II	1119077
Walls and gate piers to Service Yard, adjoining west end of north front of Ilsington House, Ilsington	II	1119078
Ha-Ha surrounding the garden of Ilsington House on east and south, and boundary wall to the garden, Ilsington	II	1119079
Waterston Manor, Lower Waterston	I	1119080
Stables, 50m south west of Waterston Manor, Lower Waterston	II	1119081
15-21, Mill Street	II	1119082
3-8, The Moor	II	1119083
Stafford Park Farm House, including boundary wall and gate piers, Northbrook	II	1119084
Willoughby House, 2, The Square	II	1119085
6, The Square	II	1119086
Hand monument, in the churchyard in the angle of the north porch and west end of north aisle of The Church Of Saint Mary, The Square	II	1119087
William Dennis Monument, in the churchyard, 2m south east of item 12/111, The Square	II	1119088
Churchyard Cross, in the churchyard, 15m south of the south porch of The Church Of Saint Mary, The Square	II	1119089
Former Stable immediately north of Keeper's Cottage, Yellowham Hill	II	1119090
Dewlish Lodge Gates	II	1119111
1-6, Chine Hill	II	1119112
1, 2 And 3, Trent Meadows including attached stables, High Street	II	1119113
Antique Book and Map Shop and Saddlers, 32, High Street	II	1119114
34 and 36, High Street	II	1119115
Remains of Cross, at SY 730915, near Parish boundary	II	1119856
1, Athelhampton Road	II	1154375
The Old Vicarage including garden walls adjoining Ilsington House, The Green	II*	1154384
16-30, High Street	II	1154401
The Reading Room, High Street	II	1154417
Entrance Gate Piers to Waterston Manor, Lower Waterston	II	1154452
Stable Flats, and Gate House 30m west south west of Waterston House, 1 and 2, Lower Waterston	II	1154460
Bridge over River Piddle, and wall along south side of river, extending west from the bridge to the gap filled by railing, Mill Street	II	1154469
12, New Street	II	1154489

Troy House including iron railings around bay, 3, The Square	II	1154504
5, The Square	II	1154512
Boundary railings, gate piers and gates to Ilsington House, The Square	II	1154516
Church of Saint Mary, The Square	I	1154532
Group of 6 Monuments in the Churchyard, 3m north east of the chancel of the Church Of Saint Mary, The Square	II	1154559
George Edwards Monument, in the churchyard, 2m south of the south transept of The Church Of Saint Mary, The Square	II	1154564
Keeper's Cottage, Yellowham Hill	II	1154567
Troy Town Cottages, 1-4, Yellowham Hill	II	1154575
K6 Telephone Kiosk west north west of No 9, The Square	II	1254380
The Martyn's House, 9, The Square	II	1303741
Tudor Cottage, 14, Mill Street	II	1303778
8, The Square	II*	1303784
Hastings Farm House, Ilsington Road	II	1303801
No 23 including front boundary railing, 23, Mill Street	II	1303814
Two garden walls at Waterston Manor, extending from The Gate House to the main entrance gateway, Lower Waterston	II	1324011
Willoughby Cottage, 12, Mill Street	II	1324012
10 and 11, New Street	II	1324013
4, The Square	II	1324014
No 7, including detached outbuilding at rear, 7, The Square	II	1324015
Group of 5 monuments in the churchyard 3m north of the north porch of The Church Of Saint Mary, The Square	II	1324016
The Stables, 1-8, Walpole Court	II	1324017
Troy Town Farm House, Yellowham Hill	II	1324018
15, High Street	II	1324048
Ilsington House, Ilsington	II*	1324049
Ilsington Farm House, Ilsington Road	II	1324050
Frome Bridge, Puddletown, West Dorset, Dorset	II	1425414

## Appendix 5: Independent site assessment conclusions

Name	(ha)	Appropriate for consideration in the Neighbourhood Plan?
Site 1: Chapel Ground (Athelhampton Road)	7.30	<b>Potentially</b> - whilst development of the whole site would lead to significant impacts on landscape character, smaller scale and sensitive development of the northern part of the site may be appropriate.
Site 2: Rod Hill Lane	12.50	<b>Potentially</b> - development of the whole site would be inappropriate given the likelihood of significant landscape character impacts. Smaller scale development of the northern part of the site may be appropriate if new access constraints can be overcome.
Site 3: The Coombe	1.58	<b>No</b> - given significant access issues, potential deliverability issues and landscape constraints.

Site 4: Kite Hill	4.51	<b>No</b> - due to access issues and the isolation of the site within the existing landscape.
Site 5: Pastures Field	0.52	<b>Potentially</b> - if access constraints and noise pollution issues can be addressed, the site may be appropriate for an allocation.
Site 6: Three Lanes	1.75	<b>Potentially</b> - if potential road safety issues constraints and noise pollution issues can be addressed.
Site 7: Judges Meadow	0.80	<b>No</b> - due to flood risk issues, historic environment constraints and potential road safety issues.
Site 8: Northbrook Farm	1.85	<b>Potentially</b> - the site offers significant potential for the provision of local employment uses and small scale housing provision through mixed use development, if noise issues and historic environment constraints at the site can be addressed. Not appropriate for residential-led development, given the relative distance of services and facilities in the Village Centre.

## Appendix 6: Pro's and con's comparison of the site options (pre-submission)

Site 1: Land at Athelhampton Road adjoining Chapel Ground (part only)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ A new access could be created onto the main road (rather than using Milom Lane junction), and could help slow speeds if the junction was designed with this in mind.</li> <li>✓ There would be sufficient space available that could include some public open space and community or employment uses if a need were to arise.</li> <li>– Having a more limited area (keeping development to the south side of the telegraph poles) would ensure the ridge and skyline would remain visible and the development would not encroach too near to Little Knoll Copse.</li> <li>– Whilst Ilsington House to the north is screened by mature trees, its setting could be impacted should this tree screen be removed (although this is already the case with the surgery).</li> <li>– Rainwater does drain from the higher ground to the south, and the flows would need to be assessed and measures taken to reduce flood risk in any design.</li> <li>✎ The site is productive farmland which would be permanently lost through this development.</li> <li>✎ The development does extend the village outwards in a linear fashion (particularly if the site size and housing numbers are overly restricted).</li> </ul>
Site 2: Rod Hill Lane (part only)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ The development would not significantly extend the village beyond its current limits or impact on existing residents.</li> <li>✓ There would be sufficient space available that could include some public open space and community or employment uses if a need were to arise.</li> <li>– The more limited area (below 70m contour) should ensure the ridge and skyline would remain visible (and although it would be more visible than the equivalent development on Site 1, this could be off-set by woodland planting on the skyline).</li> <li>– It potentially provides an opportunity to negotiate a pedestrian link around the southern edge of village (as the land is in the same ownership) but this would need to navigate across the sunken green lane and could prove costly (and may not be feasible).</li> <li>– Whilst Ilsington House to the north is screened by mature trees, its</li> </ul>

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setting could be impacted should this tree screen be removed (although this is already the case with the surgery).

- Rainwater does drain from the higher ground to the south, and the flows would need to be assessed and measures taken to reduce flood risk in any design.
- 👉 The site is productive farmland which would be permanently lost through this development.
- 👉 The site would have to be accessed off Milom Lane, which would urbanise the character of the lane (up to the site access).

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Site 5:  
Pastures Field

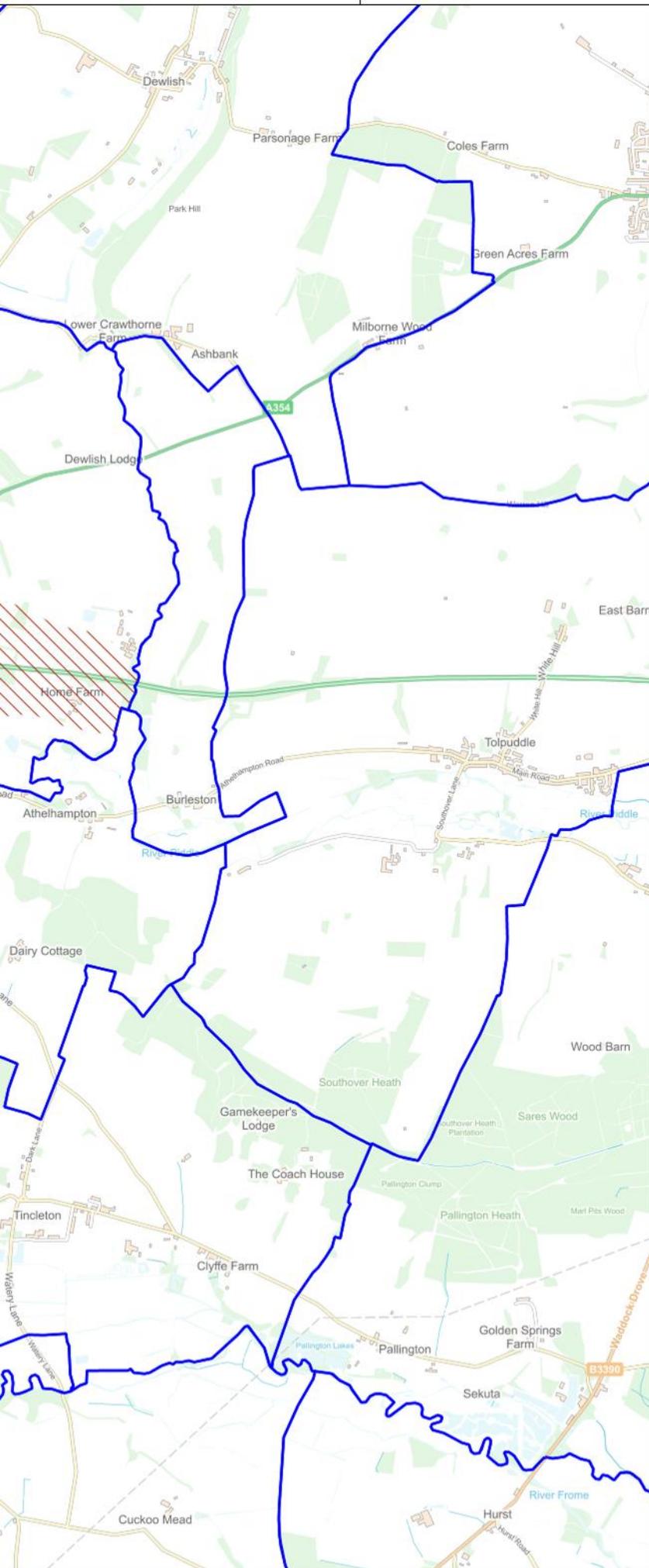
- ✓ The development is low-lying and would not significantly extend the village beyond its current limits or impact on existing residents.
- ✓ The site is particularly well located for access to facilities.
- Whilst there is some surface water flood risk associated with the western end of the site, this should not significantly reduce the site's capacity, and it is likely that measures can be taken to manage flows across the site and reduce flood risk in any design.
- Whilst the site is farmland, it is of limited size and lower grade than Sites 1 and 2.
- 👉 The site's future occupants will be subject to noise from the bypass, although it is likely that mitigation can be secured to reduce this to an acceptable level.
- 👉 There is no easy solution to providing highways access – any solution is likely to involve third party land and may not be feasible or viable.
- 👉 This area already has a large amount of development planned (41 dwellings on the site to the north and 5 dwellings to the east) that are likely to be developed over the next 5 years.

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Site 8:  
Northbrook  
Farm (part  
only)

- ✓ The development would include what are underused farm buildings to the west of Stafford Park Farm House, reducing the need to release other greenfield sites.
  - ✓ The landowner has made clear that the land to the south (the flood risk area) would be made available as an amenity to the village provided at least 10 dwellings are achieved.
  - Having a more limited area (keeping development to the existing yard, which should accommodate 10 – 12 dwellings) should ensure that the setting of Stafford Park Farm House is not adversely affected.
  - Whilst the site is part of a farmyard, the main farm buildings are further to the west, and the redevelopment of the yard should not impact on the farm's continued operation.
  - Whilst there may be bats or barn owls in some of the redundant buildings (a survey would be needed), it is likely that measures could be incorporated to retain and enhance their habitats.
  - The landowner has confirmed that they have no interest in developing employment-type units.
  - 👉 The site is slightly divorced from the main village and is not well located for residents to access facilities, although the offer of land could enable the provision of an off-road link as far as Druce Lane.
  - 👉 The site's future occupants will be subject to noise from the bypass, although it is likely that mitigation can be secured to reduce this to an acceptable level.
-





**Defined Development Boundary**



**Locally Important Buildings**



**Quiet Lanes and Connections**



Existing



Proposed



Advisory cycle route - existing

**Large vehicle routes**



**Noise sensitive area**



**Puddletown Forest**



**Local Green Space**



Public



Private

**Site Allocation**



Community



Housing - reserve site



Housing and Community

**Community Assets**

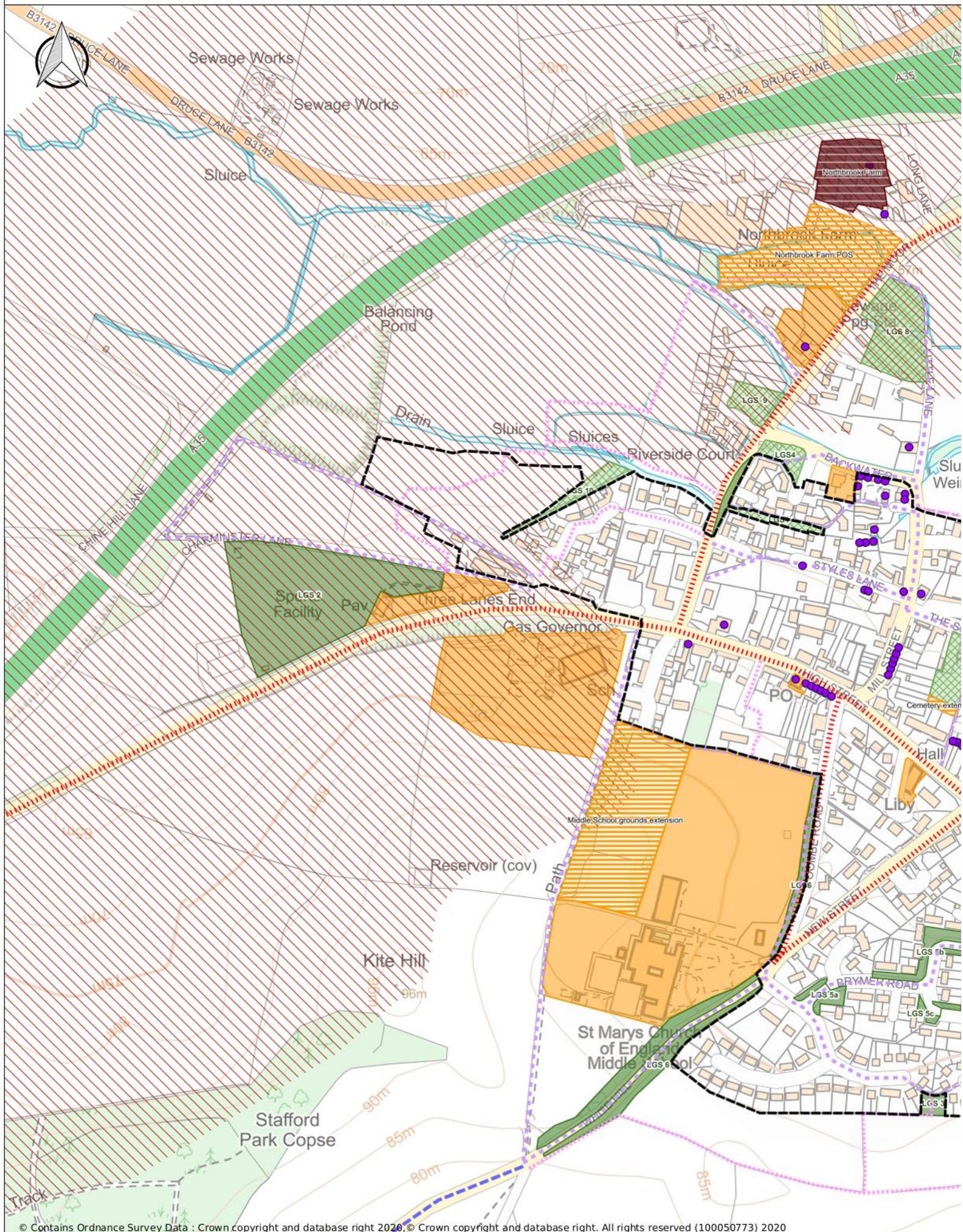


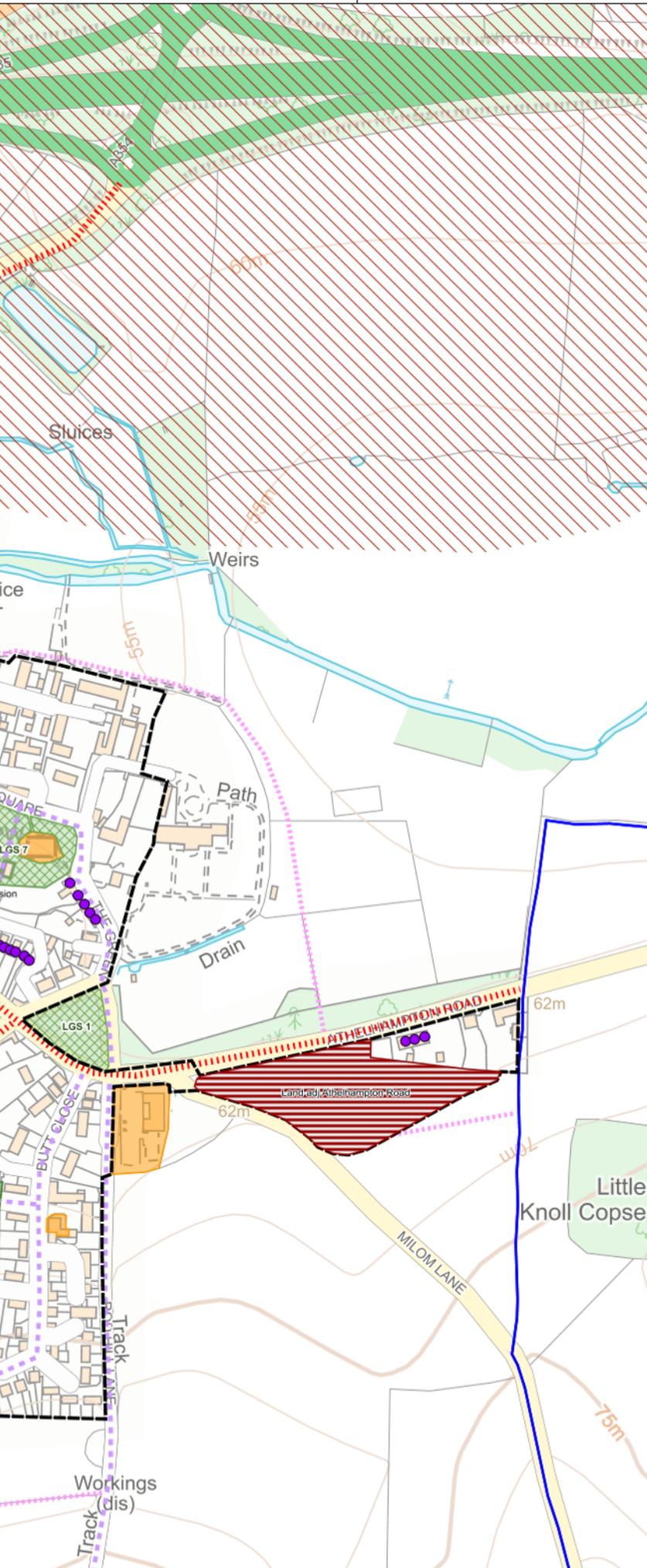
**Parish**



# Policies Map - Village

Does not include Local Plan policies and national designations





Site Allocation

-  Community
-  Housing and Community
-  Housing site

Defined Development Boundary



Locally Important Buildings



Quiet Lanes and Connections

-  Existing
-  Proposed
-  Advisory cycle route - existing

Large vehicle routes



Noise sensitive area



Local Green Space

-  Public
-  Private

Community Assets



Parish



