

Site assessment

PURITON, DOWNEND & DUNBALL NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN 2019-2032



For further information on the Neighbourhood Plan and its process, contact: puritonnp@gmail.com

Websites:

<https://puritonparishcouncil.org/> (Parish Council)

<https://puritonparishcouncil.org/neighbourhood-plan/> (Neighbourhood Plan)

Dates of versions

Pre-submission version	July 2022
Submission version	February 2023
Approved version (made)	

Contents

1	PREFACE: LOCAL AUTHORITY CHANGES	4
2	INTRODUCTION	4
2.1	What is the Plan's Remit?	5
2.2	About Puriton Parish	7
2.2.1	The Plan Area	7
2.2.2	Socio Economic and Demographic Profile of Puriton	8
2.3	National and Local Policy	11
2.3.1	National Planning Policy Framework	11
2.3.2	Local Authority Planning Policies of Relevance	11
2.4	How to read this document	15
2.5	How Have We Got Here?	15
2.6	Sustainable Development	17
2.6.1	Testing Sustainability	17
2.7	Climate Change: the "Golden Thread"	18
2.8	"Future-proofing" for Community Resilience	19
2.9	A Note About Planning Policies	20
3	VISION FOR PURITON PARISH	21
4	OBJECTIVES OF THE PLAN	22
5	DELIVERING DEVELOPMENT, FACILITIES & INFRASTRUCTURE	25
5.1	Introduction	25
6	HOUSING	29
6.1	Introduction	29
6.2	Housing Policies Summary	32
6.3	Location of New Housing Development	32
6.3.1	Policy Justification	32
6.4	Meeting the Local Needs of the Community: Housing Mix, Affordable Housing and Local Lettings	34
6.4.1	Policy Justification	34
6.5	Land South of Woolavington Road	38
6.5.1	Policy Justification	38
7	Highways, Transport and Accessibility	42
7.1	Introduction	42
7.2	Highways, Transport and Accessibility Policies Summary	47
7.3	Improving Transport, Accessibility and Connectivity	47
7.3.1	Policy Justification	47
7.4	Public Access Around the Parish	49

7.4.1	Policy Justification	49
8	Local Facilities and Amenities	51
8.1	Introduction	51
8.2	Local Facilities and Amenities Policies Summary	52
8.3	Community Facilities, Amenities and Assets	53
8.3.1	Policies Justification	53
9	Employment	60
9.1	Introduction	60
9.2	Employment Policies Summary	62
9.3	Former Royal Ordnance Factory (ROF) / Gravity Redevelopment Site	62
9.3.1	Policies Justification	62
9.4	Small Scale Employment Opportunities to Support the Local Economy and Protecting Existing Employment Areas	71
9.4.1	Policy Justification	71
9.5	Live-work Units	74
9.5.1	Policy Justification	74
10	Built and Natural Environment	77
10.1	Introduction	77
10.1.1	Natural Environment	77
10.1.2	Built Environment	82
10.2	Built and Natural Environment Policies Summary	85
10.3	High Quality and Sustainable Design	86
10.3.1	Policy Justification	86
10.4	Flood Risk	89
10.4.1	Policy Justification	89
10.5	Locally Valued Landscapes	92
10.5.1	Policies Justification	92
10.6	Locally Valued Areas of Biodiversity, Geodiversity & Habitat	96
10.6.1	Policies Justification	96
10.7	Local Green Space	98
10.7.1	Policies Justification	98
11	Monitoring and Review	106
12	Appendices	106

Acknowledgements

Thanks go to the following people without whom the Neighbourhood Plan would not have been created.

Astrid Benson

Tim Burton

Julie Coleman

Nik Lewin

Steve Medhurst

Pete Russ

Dawn Saunders

Richard Shillito

Bridget Stait

Puriton Parish Council

Stuart Todd Associates

Locality Funding

1 PREFACE: LOCAL AUTHORITY CHANGES

In April 2023, a single unitary local authority will be formed from the two-tier district councils and county council. Somerset Council will replace Sedgemoor District Council (and other district councils in the county) and Somerset County Council. This Plan has been produced, largely, before this change is to be made and so has references to both Sedgemoor District Council, as the local planning authority, and to Somerset County Council, feature in this Plan.

2 INTRODUCTION

This document is the Neighbourhood Plan (the “Plan”) for Puriton Parish which incorporates Downend and Dunball (hereafter known as ‘Puriton Parish’). It is *the community’s plan* and represents the community’s vision and priorities for how they would like to see the local area change in the coming years¹. In doing so it sets out our local planning policies which will be taken into account, when the Plan is “made” (or adopted by the local authority) as and when any proposals for development come forward in the Parish.

The Plan is one part of the development plan for the Parish to 2032, the other parts being the 2019 Sedgemoor Local Plan, the Somerset Mineral Plan, and the Waste Core Strategy Plan. This

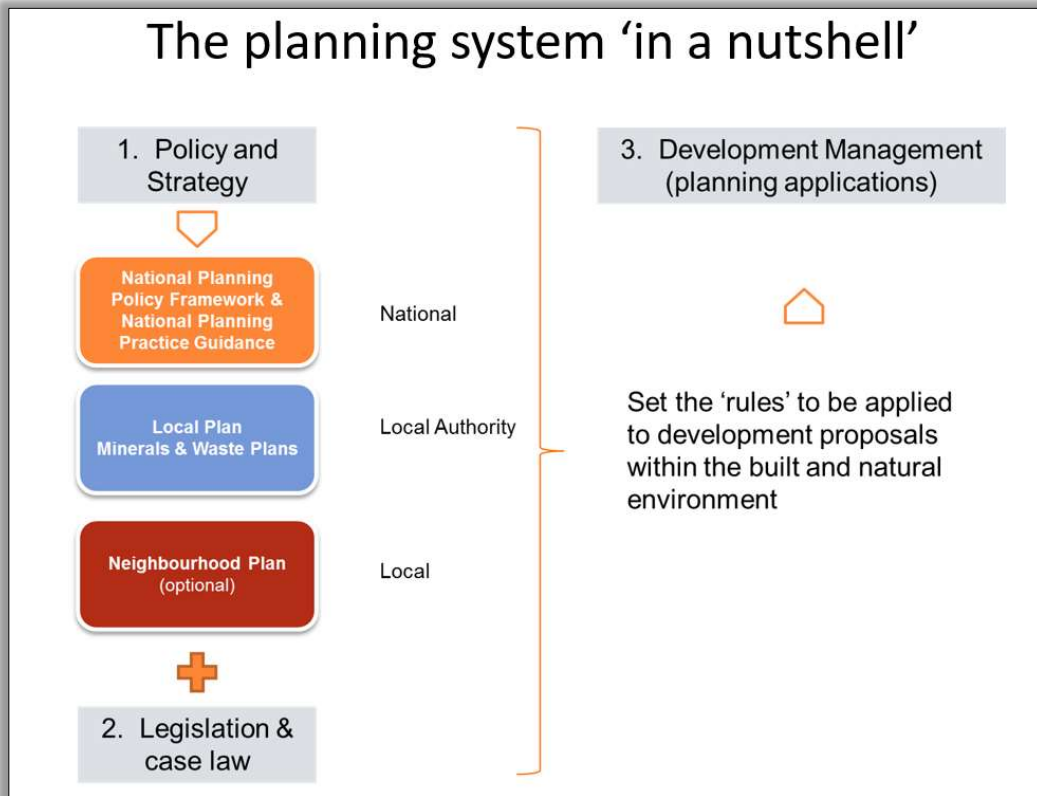


An Entrance to the Parish

Neighbourhood Plan has been prepared to be in alignment with the strategic policies of the Local Plan. For clarity, the development plan consists of any planning policies currently adopted by the local planning authority, Sedgemoor District Council, and this Neighbourhood Plan. Both the Local plan and this Neighbourhood Plan sit underneath the umbrella of national planning policy in the Government’s National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) and National Planning Practice Guidance (NPPG), as the other main planning policy documents relevant to our area.

¹ Sedgemoor District Council (SDC), as the local planning authority, designated a Neighbourhood Area for the whole of Puriton Parish in September 2016. This enabled Puriton Parish Council to prepare a Neighbourhood Plan. The Plan has been prepared by the community through the Puriton Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group (PNPSG).

The relationship between our Neighbourhood Plan and other planning policy documents is summarised in the illustration “The planning system ‘in a nutshell’”.



However, this plan should not be treated as a blueprint. When this Plan is made (adopted) policies will need to be used by the local planning authority when it considers decisions that need to be made about development proposals submitted through the planning application process. The Plan’s policies, however, cannot guarantee that a proposal will be refused nor be granted permission, but the policies will carry significant weight, alongside policies of the NPPF, NPPG and Local Plan and other material considerations when weighing up the appropriateness of the proposal in question.

2.1 What is the Plan’s Remit?

The Plan is not one which can cover every issue identified as being important to the community: it has a focus on responding to proposals for development, the appropriate use of land and protecting areas of local value and importance. It puts us, as a community, in the driving seat when it comes to having a say over what, how and where development should take place where it requires planning permission. The box below summarises what the Plan can and cannot do.

The Plan and its policies reflect our Parish's own characteristics while recognising the need to align with both national and local authority planning policies.

"It can..." ✓	"But it cannot..." ✗
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Develop policies specific to our area, for example, design of new development. ✓ Protect the facilities and areas of land that the community values most such as community buildings, playing fields, etc. ✓ Help us to get additional funding into the area, for example, through identification of projects or having a plan adopted ("made") ✓ Protect areas of land for conservation, biodiversity and landscape value. ✓ Influence the type, location and design of development. ✓ Help to secure additional funding for infrastructure and other projects. ✓ Propose regeneration projects, transport solutions and areas of land for the allocation of housing and / or employment sites if we wish to do so. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✗ Introduce policies which conflict with national or District Council "strategic" planning policies. ✗ Force requirements on developers which make the delivery of development unviable. ✗ Change regulations / legislation such as Building Regulations or Permitted Development Rights. ✗ Simply repeat (duplicate) national or District Council planning policy. ✗ Reduce the scale of new housing if proposed by the District Council. ✗ Stop all development. ✗ Deal with matters not dealt with through the planning system, for example: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Change traffic speed limits • Increase broadband speeds • Enforce parking restrictions

The purpose of the Neighbourhood Plan is therefore to guide development within the Parish and provide guidance to any interested parties wishing to submit planning applications for development within the designated Neighbourhood Area. The process of producing a plan has involved the community as widely as possible and the different topic areas are reflective of matters that are of considerable importance to Puriton Parish, its residents and community groups. The creation of this plan has therefore given the community the opportunity to guide development within their neighbourhood.

The Neighbourhood Plan has been prepared in accordance with the Town & Country Planning Acts 1990, and the Neighbourhood Planning Regulations 2017. The Puriton Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group (PNPSG)² has prepared the plan in order to establish a vision for the future

² The group comprises Councillors and residents from the community and are Astrid Benson, Tim Burton, Julie Coleman, Nik Lewin, Steve Medhurst, Pete Russ, Dawn Saunders, Richard Shillito and Bridget Stait.

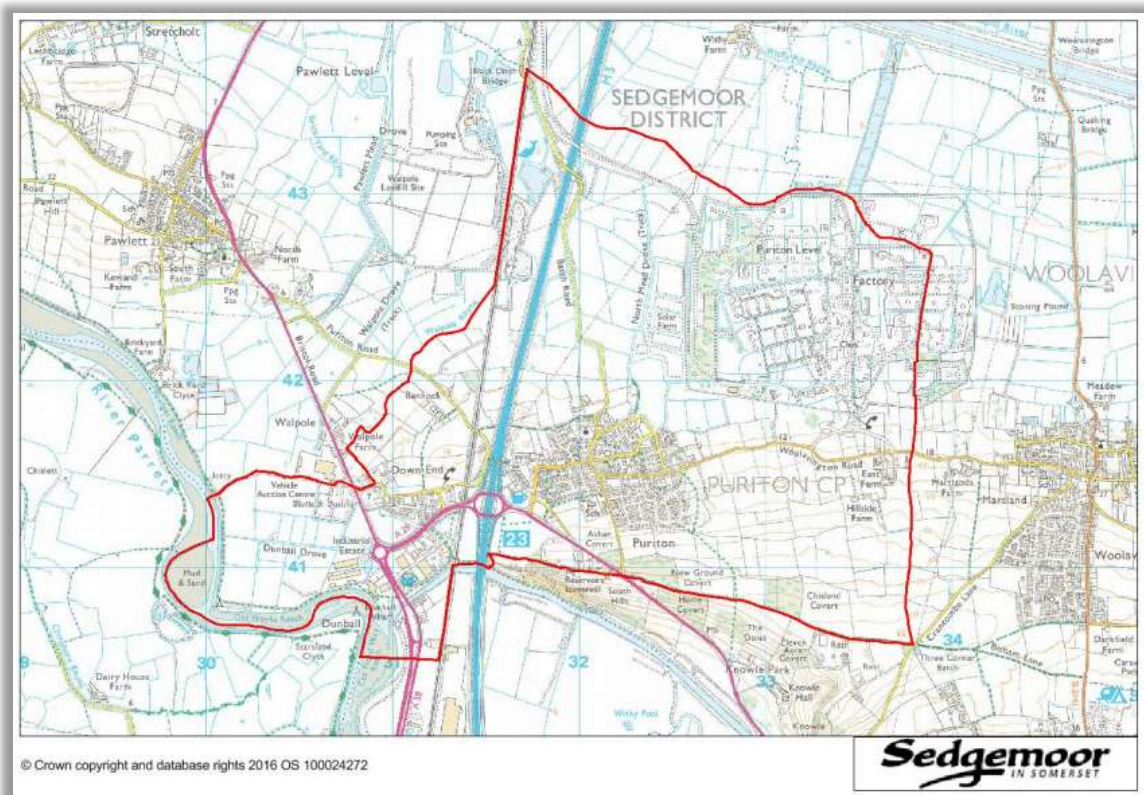
of the Parish and to set out how that vision will be realised through influencing land use and development in the plan period to 2032.

2.2 About Puriton Parish

2.2.1 The Plan Area

Map 1 shows the boundary of the Neighbourhood Plan area, which is the same as the administrative boundary of Puriton Parish. Sedgemoor District Council (SDC) approved the neighbourhood area application on 2nd February 2017³.

Map 1: The Plan Area



© crown copyright 2021 OS 100051603

The ancient village and parish of Puriton in Somerset is located on the western end of the Polden Hills. The parish includes the large, but compact village of Puriton with the hamlet of Downend 1km to the west-south-west and the industrial hamlet and wharf at Dunball 1.5km to the south-west. The parish has a diverse mix of historic and more modern properties, industrial business sites and agriculture. It is situated adjacent to junction 23 of the M5 motorway and is

³ See <https://www.sedgemoor.gov.uk/article/1297/Puriton-Neighbourhood-Plan-Designation-of-Neighbourhood-Area>

approximately 3.5 miles northeast of the busy town of Bridgwater, famous for its annual carnival held during November.



The village is proud to support a full range of facilities, including the village hall, Puriton Sports Centre, Puriton primary school, The Church

of St Michael and All Angels, The Puriton Inn, Court Farm butcher, Post Office, community orchard, allotments, and the Cutting Room hairdressers, as well as a wealth of other trades and services owned and operated by those living in the village. The parish is particularly fortunate to have the sports centre, run as a charitable trust by volunteers for the benefit of the community. The sports centre offers indoor bowls, archery, target shooting, a youth club, football and cricket pitches. It also has for hire a committee room and a function room with an equipped kitchen. It plays a significant role, not only in local provision, but a wider strategic role across an area wider than the Parish itself. The emerging Sedgemoor Built Sports Facilities Strategy supports investment and refurbishment of the sports centre as a priority. Puriton Village Hall is also charitable trust run for the benefit of the community. The hall is a real hub of social activity and has a full calendar of events, hosting local groups such as the Brownies, Sunshine Pre-School, the Puriton players. The hall has plenty of free parking. There is a grassed field and a play area alongside with a fenced area for ball games. There are many public footpaths that will take you from the bustle of the village into open countryside.

2.2.2 Socio Economic and Demographic Profile of Puriton

Change accelerated in the 20th century with improvements in accessibility first by public transport and then by wider car ownership. As a result, Puriton Parish changed considerably, growing much larger with the development of new housing. The new homes were largely provided for those who came to work at the Royal Ordnance Factory site (opened 1941) but were also attractive to those who could travel to work elsewhere. Now that the ROF site is being redeveloped, resident families have a much stronger dependence on jobs elsewhere as there are no significant employment opportunities in the villages.

The parish includes the large, but compact village of Puriton with the hamlet of Downend 1km to the west-south-west and the industrial hamlet and wharf at Dunball 1.5km to the south-west. The parish has a diverse mix of historic and more modern properties, industrial business sites and agriculture. It is situated adjacent to junction 23 of the M5 motorway and is 3.5 miles northeast of Bridgwater. Increased employment at Dunball in the later 19th century gave rise to small units of terraced housing by 1881, both there and at Waterloo Terrace and Hillside. Local authority housing was introduced in 1927, the last added in 1965; over thirty dwellings were built between 1931 and 1947. Detached villas appeared in the 1930s, perhaps marking the beginning of the village as a dormitory for Bridgwater. From the 1960s a developer built several streets of standard housing both within and to the south of the village. Subsequently there have been several further housing developments on the periphery of the village and on smaller infill sites.

People choose to live in and around Puriton Village because of its vibrant community spirit and friendly village life. There are many clubs and societies, catering for sport, hobbies and cultural interests as well as Brownies and the Sunshine Pre School. Annual community events take place around the Parish, such as Puriton Party in the Park, Puriton Flower Show, Scarecrow Competition, Sunflower Growing competition and the annual panto performed by the Puriton Players. New residents to the village are greeted with a village welcome pack, which, as well as being informative, aims to extend the hand of friendship to those new to the area.



Allotments

Inhabitants of Puriton Parish appreciate the facilities and services their community has to offer. However, access to public transport is limited and consequently there is a very high reliance on car usage, with nearly two thirds of households owning two or more cars. This causes issues with parking on road parking in the village.

Puriton Parish owes its origins to farming and the fact that the Polden ridge offers a safe and flood free location for development. During the summer months the village farms had easy access to rich grazing on the levels to the north. There are Roman remains in the area, and it

seems certain there were settlements here at that time. The River Parrett close below the ridge would have been a trading link with areas further afield including Wales and Ireland and there is said to have been a pilgrimage route along the Polden ridge to Glastonbury.

Until the late 19th century very little changed in farming except that with the advances in agriculture, populations would have declined as people moved to the towns and cities for work. Local quarries were active over many centuries and the blue lias stone is the vernacular building material in the earlier parts of the villages. Quarrying and related cement making became important from the late 19th century but had come to an end by the 1960's and there was even a short period when rock salt was commercially extracted in the early 1900's.

The popularity of Puriton Village as a place to live and the limited increase in the number of dwellings has contributed to house prices which are higher than average for this part of Somerset. This has an impact on younger people wanting to remain in the Parish and older people wanting to 'downsize' within their existing community. These were concerns that were highlighted in the questionnaire (www.puritonparishcouncil.org).

As part of the Plan making process we have explored census data to clarify basic facts about the Parish. Our review was largely based on Census information for 1991, 2001 and 2011. At the time of publishing this draft Plan, most data from the 2021 Census had not been published. Data shows that the area has the following broad characteristics which have influenced the Vision, objectives and policies of the Neighbourhood Plan:

- The parish has a population of 1,968 according to the 2011 census⁴. Puriton's population has grown over the years. The most significant recent increase in housing and population came with the development of Riverton Gardens and Puriton Gate in 2018/19.
- Population growth took place over the whole 20-year period but has slowed since 2001.
- Since 1991, the percentage of under 18's has remained constant whilst the proportion of over 65 year olds has increased. The 18 – 44 age group has seen a noticeable decrease as a proportion of the population over the same period.



⁴ See <https://www.nomisweb.co.uk/reports/localarea?compare=E04008642>

- Puriton residents are well educated with a high level of self-employment and a low level of unemployment.
- A relatively large and growing proportion work from home.
- Perceived good health is also at a very high level.
- House prices are well above local and national averages and there is a high level of owner occupation of larger houses.
- The number of dwellings increased 19 percent between 1991-2011 mirroring the population growth during the same period but as with the population, growth of new dwellings slowed between 2001-2011.

2.3 National and Local Policy

2.3.1 National Planning Policy Framework

The 2021 National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)⁵ in paragraphs 28-30 provides for communities to develop a plan for their neighbourhood which sets out the policies which will determine the decisions on future planning applications. The Neighbourhood Plan provides the tool to ensure that the right types of development are provided for the community, in accordance with the needs and priorities of the wider local area.

The NPPF requires the Plan to contribute to the achievement of sustainable development and be in general conformity with the strategic policies of the Sedgemoor Development Plan.

2.3.2 Local Authority Planning Policies of Relevance

A new Sedgemoor Local Plan was adopted in February 2019, and this Plan is required to reflect its policies and to plan positively to support them, being prepared in accordance with its policies. Proposers of development will be encouraged to engage with the local community and Parish Council at the earliest opportunity to help ensure that any proposals take into account this plan's aims and objectives, the needs of users and the views of the local community.

For the development of our policies, it is particularly important to understand the Local Plan policies which apply to our Parish. They set the strategic policy framework with which our

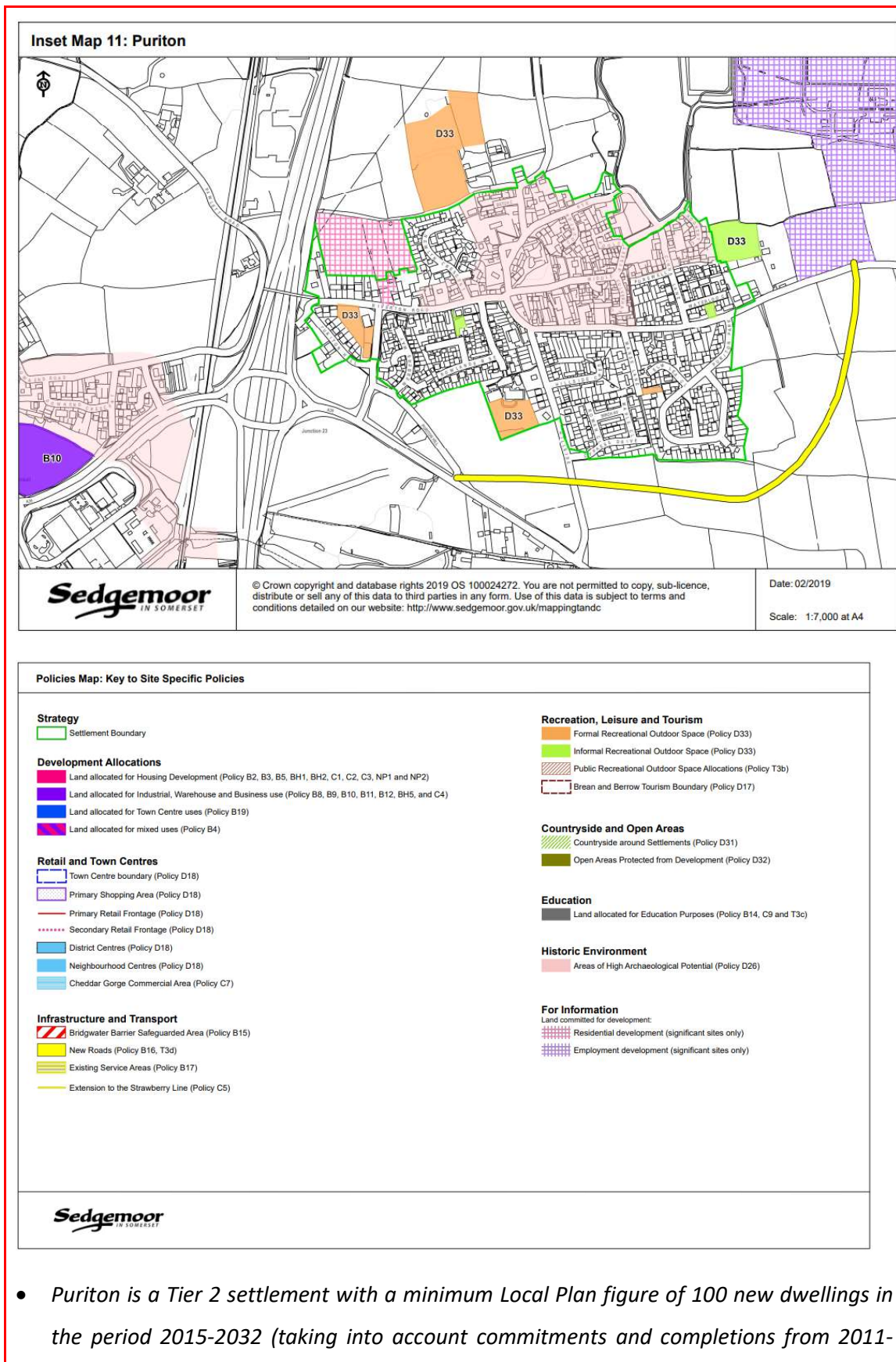
⁵ See <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/national-planning-policy-framework--2>

policies need to align. We should take particular notice of the non-place specific policies, for example, those dealing with certain types of development or areas of land, and also those policies which relate specifically to Puriton.

Without repeating sections of the Local Plan at length, the policy map from the documents is the best way to provide a snapshot summary of policies which relate to the Parish. Figure 1 over the page also summarises key policy highlights and text from the Local Plan which relates directly to Puriton village and land at Dunball (although the extracts are not intended to be an exhaustive list of policies which are relevant in the Parish from the Local Plan and the extracts should not be relied upon in isolation to consider proposals for development; the Local Plan in full, instead, being appropriate to take into account). Downend is not referenced in the Local Plan.

Some policies from the Local Plan are referenced throughout this Neighbourhood Plan where they provide important context, the strategic policy framework or help to justify our local Parish planning policies.

Figure 1: Key Local Plan Extracts and Text



2015). As a tier 2 settlement, it is a rural settlement considered to still have a good range of services that meet the needs of both the settlement itself but also close neighbouring smaller settlements. Compared to other rural settlements further down the hierarchy they are also relatively unconstrained by key environmental constraints, such as flood risk.

- *The associated scale of development should: focus for housing and employment growth appropriate to the settlements scale and character; retain existing and provision of new key local services/facilities and retain existing employment opportunities; deliver dwellings on existing committed sites with planning permission (approximately 170 dwellings); maximise development opportunities within the existing settlement through appropriate infill and redevelopment opportunities; see new strategic allocation(s) in sustainable locations outside but well related to settlement boundaries (minimum of 570 dwellings across all 6 settlements), to be identified through subsequent site allocations Development Plan Document or Neighbourhood Plans; release small scale self-build and custom build schemes well related to settlement boundaries that meet demand.*
- *Planning consent has been granted for Gravity at Puriton, which was specifically allocated for renewable or low carbon energy uses and associated green technologies. The site has also been designated as an Enterprise Zone. The site comprises approximately 90 hectares of developable land and priority will be given to renewable or low carbon energy generation and other energy-related or complementary uses, including green technologies, supply components and support services. Access will be via a new access road from the A39 Puriton Hill.*
- *Land To the North West and North East of A38 Dunball Roundabout, Bridgwater (as defined on the Policies Map) is allocated for employment development. Policy B10 defines this further.*

Source: Based on text in the Sedgemoor Local Plan, <https://www.sedgemoor.gov.uk/LocalPlan>

Having been produced in general conformity with the strategic policies of the Local Plan, the Plan is in addition able to shape and direct sustainable development in Puriton Parish. Its policies take precedence over the non-strategic policies of the Sedgemoor Local Plan, where there is any conflict and where the Plan remains the latest to be adopted of the two.

2.4 How to read this document

Each section of the plan covers a different topic. Under each heading there is the justification for the policies which provides the necessary understanding of the policy and what it is seeking to achieve. The policies themselves are presented in the coloured boxes. It is these policies against which planning applications will be assessed. It is advisable that, in order to understand the full context for any individual policy, it is read in conjunction with the supporting text.

At the end of some of the policy topic chapters there is a list of 'non land use policy aspirations'. These relate to non-land use matters which have been suggested by the community but are not appropriate to include in a



River Parrett and Dunball

Neighbourhood Plan (as policies) which is focussed on the use of land. However, they do signal actions which could be taken forward by the Parish Council or others, or initiatives which could be funded by Community Infrastructure Levy monies or developer contributions.

A glossary of planning terms can be found at **Appendix 1**.

2.5 How Have We Got Here?

In order to produce the Plan, its development has been driven by a steering group, comprised of residents and Parish Councillors. It was recognised at an early stage that for the Plan to be truly representative of the planning issues of relevance in the Parish and to be *the community's plan*, we would need to conduct thorough engagement with those who live and work in the Parish. We also recognised that the Plan could not be properly developed without the input of organisations and Agencies with a district, county, sub-regional or national remit.

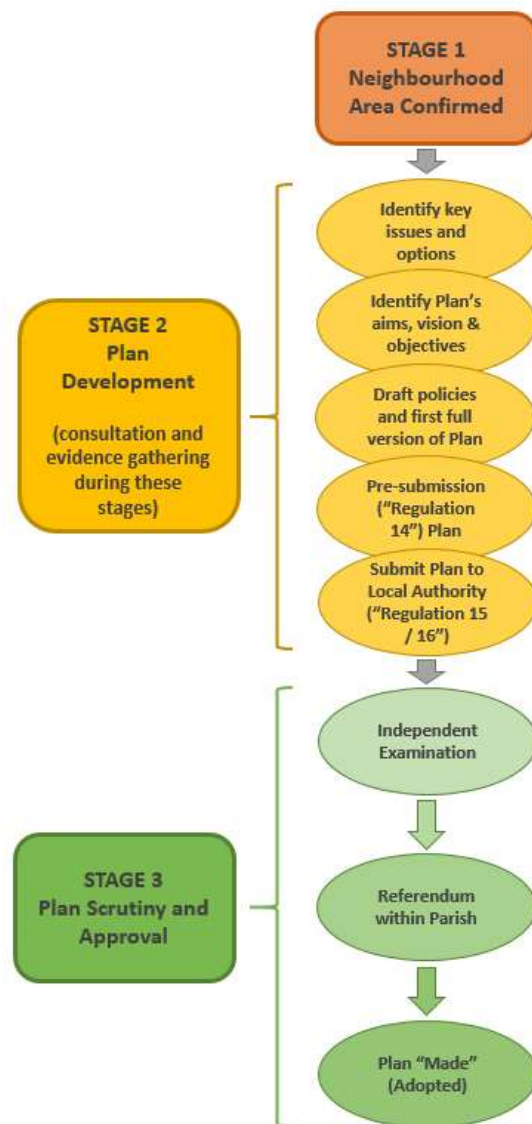
The process and types of consultation and discussion that we have gone through is documented in detail in our Consultation Statement which accompanies this Plan. However, the key methods we have used have included:

- Public exhibitions, meetings and events;
- A community questionnaire sent to all households;

- Discussion with local businesses; and,
- Directly contacting wider-than-local organisations and Agencies (strategic stakeholders) which have an interest in planning issues in the parish.

Our development of the plan was based on a desire to be open and encouraging comments and contributions from all quarters with the aim being to achieve consensus, but also to have debates about issues where the community was divided in its views.

Having developed the plan through this iterative approach and consulted the community, statutory and strategic consultees during the Regulation 14 / Pre-submission consultation, this Submission version of the Plan is the final version that we wish to proceed to Examination. The Public Examination will follow after the local planning authority's Submission consultation. After Examination, conducted by an independent Examiner, assuming that the Plan passes through the Examination successfully, the Plan will be subject to a public referendum where residents on the electoral register will be asked if they support the final Plan. If the referendum answer is a "yes" from a majority of voters turning out on the day, the plan will be "made" (or adopted) by the local planning authority.



2.6 Sustainable Development

The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) and National Planning Practice Guidance (NPPG) set out the Government's planning policy to which all plans and proposals for development should comply. The NPPF includes, at its heart, a "presumption in favour of sustainable development". It is important to understand what that means for our Plan as it sets the parameters within which we can make proposals and set policies.

When taking decisions on proposals for development this means that proposals should be approved where they accord with the development plan without delay; and where the development plan is absent, silent or relevant policies are out-of-date, planning permission should be granted unless any adverse impacts of doing so would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits when assessed against the policies in the NPPF or specific policies in the NPPF indicate that development should be restricted. Translating this to what it means for our neighbourhood plan, it states that "Neighbourhood plans should support the delivery of strategic policies contained in local plans or spatial development strategies; and should shape and direct development that is outside of these strategic policies"⁶. The NPPF goes on to say that "Neighbourhood planning gives communities the power to develop a shared vision for their area. Neighbourhood plans can shape, direct and help to deliver sustainable development, by influencing local planning decisions as part of the statutory development plan. Neighbourhood plans should not promote less development than set out in the strategic policies for the area, or undermine those strategic policies"⁷. Once a neighbourhood plan has been brought into force, the policies it contains take precedence over existing non-strategic policies in a local plan covering the neighbourhood area, where they are in conflict; unless they are superseded by strategic or non-strategic policies that are adopted subsequently."⁸

2.6.1 Testing Sustainability

While the Plan has undergone a screening process undertaken by the local planning authority and statutory agencies to determine whether or not the Plan requires a Strategic Environmental

⁶ See paragraph 13, National Planning Policy Framework, July 2021, <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/national-planning-policy-framework--2>

⁷ Neighbourhood plans must be in general conformity with the strategic policies contained in any development plan that covers their area.

⁸ See paragraphs 29 and 30, National Planning Policy Framework, July 2021, <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/national-planning-policy-framework--2>

Assessment (SEA) and / or Habitats Regulation Assessment (HRA)⁹, we have been mindful of a need to consider the Plan's policies against the ability to deliver sustainable development as set out in the NPPF. We have set this testing out in our Basic Conditions Statement which accompanies this Plan.

2.7 Climate Change: the "Golden Thread"

The planning system has a key role to play in sustainability, as we have set out above, and within that context has a significant part to play in reducing our impact on climate change, helping us mitigate impact and adapting to the changes which are already occurring.

While nationally, a target has been set for the country to be "net zero" in relation to carbon emissions, in Sedgemoor, the target has been brought forward through a climate emergency being declared by the District Council (alongside the other Somerset local authorities), to reach net zero carbon emissions by 2030¹⁰.

There are several statements, initiatives, plans and strategies which already set the context for Puriton and present both opportunities for local action and a wider response to the changing climate. This includes the



county-wide Climate Emergency Strategy¹¹ to which Sedgemoor District Council has signed up.

Our Plan can play its part in helping to reach targets set nationally to reduce carbon emissions and also at the county and district levels through its role as a Plan for the Parish. This means both encouraging the reduction of emissions but also looking to mitigate and adapt to the

⁹ See the Plan's webpages at <https://puritonparishcouncil.org/neighbourhood-plan/> to see the screening report and decision.

¹⁰ See <https://www.sedgemoor.gov.uk/article/4093/Climate-Change>

¹¹ See <https://www.somerset.gov.uk/waste-planning-and-land/climate-emergency/>

changing climate, for example, in terms of a response to flood risk or greening of the environment, encouraging local initiatives and enabling change, for example in local food production, or helping to ensure that development does not exacerbate problems linked to or the causes of climate change.

One of the key challenges facing us will be to have a positive impact on our changing climate at the local level through mitigation and ensuring that development and our environment evolves to adapt to impact, while not compromising the natural environment, quality of the built environment and the local economy.

Rather than try to design a single planning policy about climate change and how mitigation and adaptation measures can be supported, we have sought to “climate change proof” the policies we have developed within each topic. This means that the response, through the planning system and this Plan, is a “golden thread” through the whole Plan. As climate change is a “cross-cutting” issue which affects and can be affected by so many topics, individual policies within our topics have been designed to apply criteria, where relevant, to help mitigate impacts or adapt to our changing climate.

2.8 “Future-proofing” for Community Resilience

The Coronavirus Covid 19 pandemic demonstrated that action within the community at the local level are critical in helping us to cope with and manage our way through unknown “shocks” which can impact on how we live and work. We cannot guarantee that this type of event will not happen again in the short to medium term and we see it as the planning system’s duty, alongside many other measures in other sectors to try to draw positives from what has occurred, learn lessons and plan for a future which could help to soften the impact, socially and economically, at the local community scale. The pandemic profoundly changed our lifestyles and we need to recognise the opportunities that the experience now gives us and the need for proactive measures to be taken that it now presents. To not grasp these and act on them would be a failure to learn to create better environments.

While there are limitations of our Plan in relation to measures we can introduce which are either not already being set in train by changes to national planning or other policies and regulations or are not within the remit of the planning system to influence, our Plan seeks to introduce policies which can help our economy and environment to adapt to changes where it can.

2.9 A Note About Planning Policies

The planning policies in this Plan are not able, within the context of planning policies and regulations, to provide a solution for every issue in the Parish. Broadly speaking, the following factors need to be remembered when looking at or using the policies in the Plan:

- Policies must be evidenced and justified, supported by written evidence gathered and community consultation;
- Policies need to relate to land-use and either protect something, propose something or be able to be used by the local planning authority to respond to a development proposal (i.e. help determine its appropriateness, or not);
- Policies should be ‘positively framed’ to support or enable development subject to various criteria / conditions;
- Policies cannot deal with certain “excluded matters” such as waste or minerals planning matters which are dealt with by the County Council;
- Policies in a neighbourhood plan should not simply duplicate policies set out elsewhere in policy at the national or local authority level. The neighbourhood plan forms part of the “development plan”, the other part of which is the Local Plan. The policies across these documents should align, with policies in the neighbourhood plan being in “general conformity” with the strategic policies of the Local Plan; and,
- It is the planning policies in the Plan which carry legal weight (or are the statutory element of the Plan).

Proposers of development are encouraged to engage with the local community and Parish Council at the earliest opportunity to help ensure that any proposals take into account this plan’s aims and objectives, the needs of users and the views of the local community.

3 VISION FOR PURITON PARISH

As explained in Chapter 3, the questionnaire and consultation events sought views from the community about what they valued whilst living in the Parish of Puriton, what they disliked and how they would like to see the area evolve over the coming years. There were clear themes in the responses and these led us to the following draft Vision.

VISION

“We aspire to build on the strong community spirit and pride that local people have for the village and surrounding countryside, by ensuring development does not damage those essential characteristics. Development will be accompanied by the necessary growth in amenities and infrastructure and will ensure that Puriton retains its individuality as a historical village, separate from Bridgwater. Creating new, and enhancing existing, green spaces along with continued and improved access to the countryside around Puriton is crucial. The development at the former Royal Ordnance Factory offers a unique opportunity to realise some of the improvements needed, along with creating local employment opportunities. The Neighbourhood Plan will seek to ensure that achieve the best possible outcomes for the residents and village.”

This Vision was consulted on at the November 2017 event and 87 % indicated their support. The Vision is now included in this final plan. The purpose of the Vision is not only to set out what sort of place Puriton Parish should be in 2032, but also provide the starting point for the preparation of policy objectives for the individual topic chapters (Chapters 5 to 10).

4 OBJECTIVES OF THE PLAN

Our objectives set out, by topic, what we want to achieve through this Plan. The objectives are reflective of what can be achieved through this Plan as a land-use planning document and within the planning system. Non-land-use planning matters which we have identified or which have been identified as important by the community during the plan-making process are summarised as community actions, projects or priorities elsewhere in the Plan. In turn, our planning policies are set out within the context of these objectives. Throughout, our objectives and our policies in this Plan also seek to react positively to the climate change emergency. Figure 2 below summarises our Objectives and policy areas under each topic, which have also been shaped using consultation responses which identified what was important in the Parish for the future.

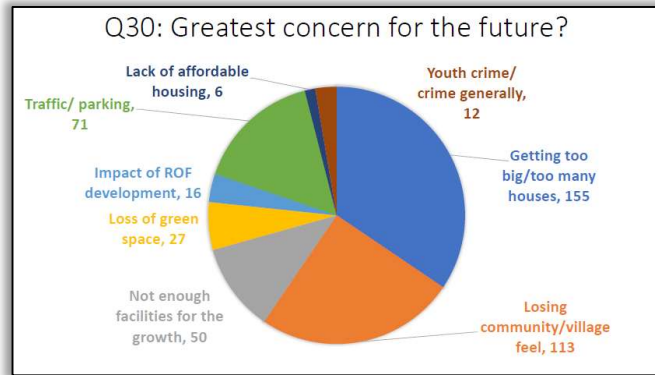


Figure 2: Objectives of the Plan

Objectives	Policy Areas
Delivering Development, Facilities & Infrastructure	
To influence the provision of facilities and service & transport infrastructure in relation to new development which properly fulfils the additional demand placed upon it by new development.	<i>None, cross-cutting objective across other topics and policies</i>
Housing	
To meet the housing needs required in the emerging Sedgemoor Local Plan through allocations and policies which deliver well located sites (which are the least damaging option for the environment and community amenity) with a range of house sizes. To respond positively to locally	Location of New Housing Development

Objectives	Policy Areas
identified need and demand, the priority will be to deliver smaller, less expensive properties for sale, affordable housing to rent and housing for older residents.	Meeting the Local Needs of the Community: Housing Mix
To ensure that new development provides high quality outdoor living space and dwellings are “future proofed” to exceed current sustainable development and accessibility standards where possible and feasible.	Meeting the Local Needs of the Community: Affordable Housing Meeting the Local Needs of the Community: Affordable Housing (Local Lettings)
Highways, Transport and Accessibility	
To manage and control the impact of traffic through the location of future developments as well as by the appropriate use of speed restrictions, traffic calming, footpaths, cyclepaths, encouraging public and community transport and additional car parking with improved lighting and security.	Improving Transport, Accessibility and Connectivity Public Access Around the Parish
Local Facilities and Amenities	
To maintain, protect, enhance and expand the range of community services, amenities, civic open spaces and facilities in Puriton Parish to meet the needs of all sections of the community.	Community Facilities, Amenities and Assets
Employment	
To ensure that the redevelopment of the former ROF site does not give rise to any adverse impact upon the amenity of nearby residents or to the character, appearance and setting of the village.	Former Royal Ordnance Factory (ROF) / Gravity Redevelopment Site

Objectives	Policy Areas
To capitalise upon the economic and sustainable development benefits that will arise from the regeneration of the former ROF site for the benefit of the local community.	
To help enable the provision of enhanced and additional employment space to support local small and start-up businesses and help young people to access local employment opportunities.	<p>Small Scale Employment Opportunities to Support the Local Economy</p> <p>Live-work Units</p>
Built and Natural Environment	
To maintain the high quality of the natural and built environments of Puriton Parish, and to protect its well-preserved heritage	<p>High Quality and Sustainable Design</p> <p>Locally Valued Landscapes</p> <p>Locally Valued Areas of Biodiversity, Geodiversity and Habitat</p> <p>Local Green Space</p> <p>Flood Risk</p>

5 DELIVERING DEVELOPMENT, FACILITIES & INFRASTRUCTURE

Objective

“To influence the provision of facilities and service & transport infrastructure in relation to new development which properly fulfils the additional demand placed upon it by new development.”

5.1 Introduction

During our community consultation in 2019, we received numerous suggestions that infrastructure should be provided to cope with the additional demand placed on it by new housing and employment developments. Therefore, during the development of this Plan, an objective was identified to help ensure that infrastructure, facilities and services are provided in-step with new development in a timely way, as it is delivered.

The objective below is intended to help satisfy the concerns held by the community about infrastructure provision. However, the planning system prevents the Plan from requiring infrastructure up-front, apart from essential infrastructure required to service the development as it is delivered and as housing completions are made. The Local Plan¹² provides some comfort here requiring infrastructure to be provided in policy S3: Infrastructure Delivery which states that:

“New development will be required to provide and contribute towards the provision of services, facilities and infrastructure at a rate, scale and pace to meet the needs and requirements that are expected to arise from that development. All new development that generates a demand for infrastructure will only be permitted if the reasonable and necessary on and off-site infrastructure required to support and mitigate the impact of the development is provided. This should either already be in place or secured through a reliable mechanism (such as a legal agreement) to ensure that it will be delivered at the time and in the location it is required. In identifying infrastructure requirements, development proposals should also demonstrate that full regard has been given, where appropriate, to implementing the requirements of the Infrastructure Delivery Strategy. The Council will secure contributions from development in line

¹² See adopted Local Plan, https://www.sedgemoor.gov.uk/media/6202/Sedgemoor-Local-Plan-2011-2032-Adoption-Version/pdf/Local_Plan_2011-2032_-_Adoption_Version.pdf?m=636887820984770000 , p.32

with its CIL Charging Schedule for specific infrastructure identified on its Regulation 123 list. For other infrastructure necessary to make development acceptable the Council will seek provision of onsite or offsite infrastructure through the use of planning conditions and planning obligations (section 106 agreements) on a site by site basis. In determining the nature and scale of any planning obligations, viability issues will be taken into account where this is clearly demonstrated through open book negotiation. Where the Council seeks independent financial advice to assess viability issues on a proposal the developer will be expected to fund this.”

However, aside from essential transport infrastructure, mitigation works (for example flood relief and sustainable drainage systems) and service infrastructure required to serve a new development’s residents on occupying development, the provision of other social, economic and environmental infrastructure such as usable greenspace, local community facilities, business premises, health and education facilities, and / or shop units can sometimes lag behind, often awaiting completion of a phase of the development or payment of Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) receipts to deliver them.

Local planning authorities and parish councils can use Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) money raised from qualifying development to provide or improve infrastructure, and to pay for the operation and maintenance of this infrastructure. When this Plan has been “made” (adopted) the parish council will receive 25% of all CIL payments to utilise in the parish, with the other 75% being used by the local authority for essential strategic infrastructure.

1. What is CIL?

CIL is applied as a charge on each square metre (m²) of new development. The amount payable varies depending on the location of the development within the District and the type of development being proposed. Please look at our Charging Schedule and associated Charging Zones which are available at www.sedgemoor.gov.uk/cil

2. What type of development is liable to pay CIL?

CIL will be charged on all new residential and hotel developments, supermarket and retail warehouse development where the following applies:

- The development will create at least 100m² of new build.
- Development of less than m² of new build that results in the creation of a new dwelling.
- The conversion of a building that is not in lawful use, which results in one or more new dwellings.

3. What type of development is not liable to pay CIL?

The following types of planning applications are not liable for CIL:

- Development containing less than 100m² of new build, provided that it does **not** result in the creation of a new dwelling.
- The conversion of a building that is in-use (see definition under (4) below).
- The conversion of a building that is not in-use (see definition under (4) below) provided that it does not result in new dwellings (i.e. any form of residential or student accommodation).
- Development of buildings into which people do not normally go, or into which they only go intermittently for the purposes of inspecting or maintaining fixed plant or machinery (for example wind turbines, electricity sub stations etc.).
- Mezzanine floors of less than 200m² inserted into an existing building, unless they form part of a wider development (e.g. external alterations, changes of use etc.).

Source: Sedgemoor District Council FAQs on Community Infrastructure Levy,
<https://www.sedgemoor.gov.uk/cil>

The questionnaire consulted with the villagers where the CIL should be used. **Alongside other**

potential projects set out in this Plan, such as those in the approved plans for village enhancements as detailed in planning application 42/20/00022 in relation to the Gravity development and the improvements identified through consultation necessary for the sports centre, the following list are **additional suggestions** where CIL could be used in the plan period. This list is not prioritised in any way and use of CIL funds to deliver any of them would also depend on timing of monies being made available and consideration of other priorities at the time and / or new projects which could, in the future, be identified.

Projects which can relate or be delivered in whole or in part through the planning system	
A Community Centre/Cafe	Access to the school moved away from Rowlands Rise
Bigger Village Hall	Train Station at Dunball re-opened
Street lighting and footpath on the Puriton to Woolavington road (Woolavington Road)	Cycle paths
Projects, programmes and actions which can be pursued by the community outside of the planning system (but which may or may not receive planning financial contributions)	
Outdoor exercise equipment	Benches around the village
Subsidised activities to encourage residents to meet regularly	Yellow lining on roads where people should not be parking
A scheme that enables the more isolated and lonely people within the village to be supported and included	Cleaning pavements and gutters and footpaths cleared of weeds and properly maintained/tidied up
A club and transport facilities for the elderly	More police presence
Litter bins	An additional bus stop at Puriton Park
More trees and village flower displays	CCTV

This topic and its objective, which cuts across many of our topic areas in the Plan, does not have a policy or policies specific to it but instead, a number of the policies in this Plan provide a response by supporting or requiring the delivery of specific projects.

6 HOUSING

Objectives

“To meet the housing needs required in the emerging Sedgemoor Local Plan through allocations and policies which deliver well located sites (which are the least damaging option for the environment and community amenity) with a range of house sizes. To respond positively to locally identified need and demand, the priority will be to deliver smaller, less expensive properties for sale, affordable housing to rent and housing for older residents.”

“To ensure that new development provides high quality outdoor living space and dwellings are “future proofed” to exceed current sustainable development and accessibility standards where possible and feasible.”

6.1 Introduction

As set out in the introduction to this Plan, the parish has a range of dwelling types from historic to modern properties. Most change has occurred during the 20th century in Puriton village with most new homes provided in the period after 1941 to accommodate people who worked at the Royal Ordnance Factory (ROF) site.

The parish has a population of 1,968 according to the 2011 census¹³. The greatest proportions of people fall within the 30-44 (17.6%), 45-49 (21%) and 65-74 (12.9%). At that time there were 834 households across 864 dwellings. Puriton’s population has grown over the years with the most significant recent increase in housing and population coming with the development of Riverton Gardens and Puriton Gate in 2018/19.

During consultation, the local community has told us¹⁴, amongst other things, that:

- The greatest need for housing by type is for bungalows and sheltered housing, while the greatest need by size of dwelling is for 2- and 3-bedroom houses. Housing for older generations was also highlighted with suggestions for retirement homes, nursing homes

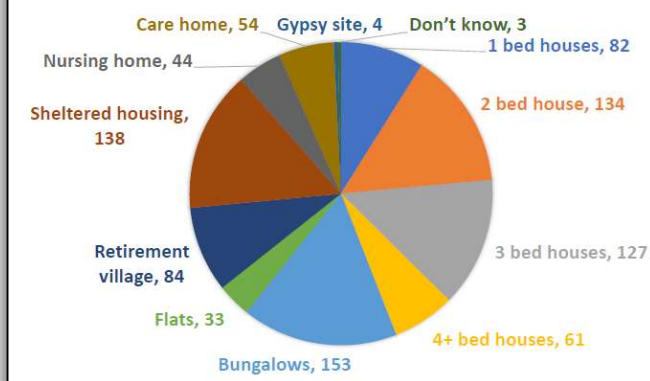
¹³ See <https://www.nomisweb.co.uk/reports/localarea?compare=E04008642>

¹⁴ Source: see Community Survey Responses, May/June 2019, see <https://puritonparishcouncil.org/neighbourhood-plan/>

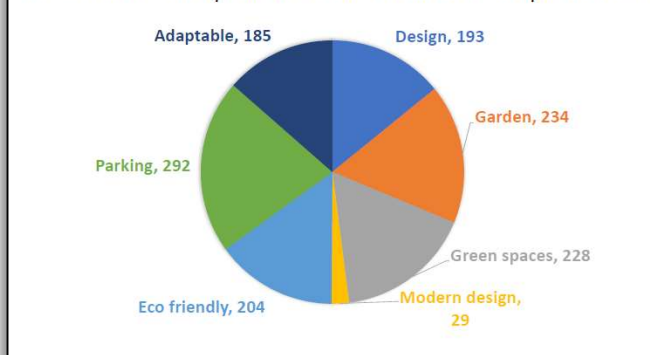
and care homes;

- There is generally support for more affordable housing in the Parish with even levels of support for shared ownership / rent to buy, affordable rent and starter homes (-20% market value); and,
- That when it comes to what is important for new developments, parking, garden space, green spaces, being eco-friendly were the most supported factors, with design and adaptability also being well-supported.

Q11: What type of housing is needed?



14: What is important for new developments?



From our written evidence base, the key messages can be summarised as follows:

- Community feedback is also supported by the census data set out earlier in this Plan which demonstrates that, statistically, Puriton Parish is characterised by large, expensive owner occupied houses with relatively few smaller, cheaper homes to buy or rent (privately or through a Housing Association). This pattern has not changed since the census.
- The Local Plan Policy T2a requires a minimum of 100 dwellings to be allocated at Puriton (the settlement, not the wider Parish) in the plan period 2011 to 2032 (by the local authority and / or the Neighbourhood Plan). Housing completions and commitments in the planing system (for example, with planning permission but not built) to April 2022 numbers 149 across the parish area. In addition, in May 2022, outline planning permission was given to the proposal on Land South of Woolavington Road for 120 dwellings. Therefore the minimum Local Plan requirement has been met, if commitments with planning permission are delivered.

- The Plan therefore does not need to allocate housing sites to deliver additional housing to meet the Local Plan minimum target (and a Neighbourhood Plan does not have to allocate any sites at all in any case);
- Our Housing Needs Assessment¹⁸ has identified the following key issues:



New Housing in Puriton

- In line with the district and national level, the vast majority of households in Puriton are owner-occupiers. This is followed by the private rented sector, and the social rented sector, both of which exhibit lower proportions than seen at district and national level;
- House prices have grown significantly for all house types, 57.2% overall. Both detached and terraced homes experienced a price growth 56% between 2009 and 2018, whilst semi-detached homes increased by 38.9%. Meanwhile, there were too few flat sales to enable any comparison of this house type;
- The average net annual household income before housing costs (equalised) across a wider than Parish area¹⁹ in 2015/16 was £28,500, while the average total gross annual income was £37,400. Sedgemoor's Lower Quartile income (based on two individuals with Lower Quartile earnings) for 2018 was £22,800 per year;
- The income required to buy an average market home for sale is higher than the income available to those on median household incomes. This means that those on median incomes cannot access entry level market homes for sale. The income required to buy an entry-level home for sale is significantly higher than those on lower quartile earnings (even where two members of the household are earning);
- Turning to affordable homes for sale (e.g. Discounted Market Sale and Shared Ownership tenures), i.e. those aimed at people unable to purchase a market home, the analysis in this HNA suggests that the Purchase Threshold for all of these products is too high to meet the needs of those on LQ earnings. The analysis also suggests that those

¹⁸ Source: Puriton Housing Needs Assessment, AECOM, 2019, see <https://puritonparishcouncil.org/neighbourhood-plan/>

¹⁹ Middle Super Output Area or MSOA, reference E02006066

on median incomes cannot afford to purchase these products (with the exception of shared ownership at 50% or lower shares);

- It is recommended that for Puriton around 83% should be Affordable housing for rent tenures, specifically social rent, in line with the SHMA. In addition to this, 17% should be for intermediate tenures, of which all should be delivered as shared ownership to reflect the relative unaffordability of Discounted Market Sale as discussed above; and,
- Compared with the LPA, Puriton is characterised by a slightly higher proportion of detached homes and flats. Meanwhile there is a slightly lower proportion of terraced homes and semi-detached in the NA compared to the wider District. The housing stock in Puriton is characterised by generally larger dwellings, with high proportions of properties with 5 to 6 rooms or more. This theme is broadly reflected at the LA level, but to a lesser extent.

6.2 Housing Policies Summary

Responding to the consultation responses from the community and our evidence base, our policies below focus on areas where it is considered additional policies are required and add value (and do not simply repeat) the policies of the Local Plan. They therefore focus on providing a development strategy which seeks to respond positively to Local Plan policies on housing numbers required, supporting the principle of development within Puriton village as the main settlement subject to development, and providing appropriate support to help bring forward housing which supports the identified needs and demand of the local community. Where sites are promoted which are outside the Village settlement boundary and not at the allocated sites, they will have to satisfy the policies in the Local Plan with particular reference to Policy T2b which seeks, amongst other criteria, justifying the local need for the proposal, demonstrating community support and the provision of 40% on-site affordable housing.

6.3 Location of New Housing Development

6.3.1 Policy Justification

As noted earlier in this Plan, the Sedgemoor Local Plan identifies Puriton as a location suitable for some housing development. While, as community consultation has confirmed, we are not opposed to development and we understand the implications for development in the Parish

arising from the Local Plan, our policy below sets clear parameters for the principle of development in Puriton. We consider that there is no reason to seek to amend the built-up area boundary around Puriton village set in the Local Plan, but our policy emphasises the criteria which should be applied, in the context of the key issues identified above. No other settlements in the Parish have a built-up area boundary and are therefore classed as being within “countryside” where the Local Plan sets restrictions on the types and scale of development suitable in such locations.

We have a preference for previously developed (brownfield) sites or infill sites to be developed over greenfield sites within the village but understand that this is within the context that such preferences cannot be applied in a purely sequential way. Our policy is also supported by our Character Assessment²⁰ which highlights the value of the landscape setting to the character of Puriton village and to the integration overall between the rural and built settings.

POLICY H1: LOCATION OF NEW HOUSING DEVELOPMENT

1. In accordance with the Sedgemoor Local Plan Puriton village is the most sustainable settlement in the Parish and this is where most new homes and development will be focussed.

2. The Puriton settlement boundary is reproduced in Figure 1 and is consistent with that in the adopted Sedgemoor Local Plan. Development proposals for new dwellings within the defined settlement boundary will be supported in principle. Preferred sites will be:

- i) On previously developed land; or,**
- ii) On an infill site (outside of the curtilage of existing built properties).**

3. New housing proposals that come forward outside, but well-related to, the settlement boundary or in any other (“Countryside”) locations elsewhere in the Parish will need to satisfy other relevant development plan policies.

4. Proposers of development are encouraged to engage with the local community and Parish Council at the earliest opportunity to help ensure that any proposals take into account both this plan’s aims and objectives and the views of the local community.

²⁰ The character assessment forms context within the Design Codes document. This can be seen here <https://puritonparishcouncil.org/neighbourhood-plan/>

6.4 Meeting the Local Needs of the Community: Housing Mix, Affordable Housing and Local Lettings

6.4.1 Policy Justification

As we have set out earlier in this section, we are content with the housing strategy with regard to overall numbers, set out in the Local Plan produced by the local authority. Our policies provide the further local policy framework within which any proposals which do come forward are considered. Our policy below sets out our approach to responding to local housing demand and need. We have a positive track-record in terms of absorbing new development which has sought to address gaps in local needs housing.

Our housing needs assessment sought to provide details about need, across tenures and types²¹. It suggested that “The recommended house size mix in Puriton is 30.1% of dwellings in new developments should have 1 bedroom, 42.8% should have two bedrooms, 19.2% should have three bedrooms, 3% should have four bedrooms and 4.9% should be of 5 or more bedrooms. It is important to keep these figures in perspective. They represent estimates based on demographic modelling but do not take into account other factors such as the nature of the existing stock (in terms of local mix and quality), the sites that are likely to be developed (and what might be an appropriate mix of dwellings given the context), viability matters or the role of the NA in the wider housing market. The latter point is important since although there may be biases in the demographic mix and stock in particular neighbourhoods, this may serve an important function in the wider market area.”²²

Local consultation suggested that there is greatest need for 2- and 3-bedroom houses (most likely to support a need for families and young people entering the housing market and for dwellings which provide suitable accommodation for older generations. We consider that there is no need for



Housing in Puriton

²¹ See <https://puritonparishcouncil.org/neighbourhood-plan/>

²² See HNA, p.37, paragraph 155, see <https://puritonparishcouncil.org/neighbourhood-plan/>

or value that can be added to the local authority's policies relating to the percentage of affordable housing required (if proposals are made which meet the thresholds of development where the requirement is triggered) in the built-up area or with regard to the requirements relating to exceptions sites in the countryside outside of the Puriton built-up area boundary. Dialogue with local estate agents (which has given a picture of demand for certain types and sizes of dwellings and gaps in the local market) also confirms that the range of dwelling types identified in our policy below, based on both our housing needs assessment findings, the local authority SHMA and local consultation responses is appropriate. We acknowledge that the picture of supply and demand is fluid and will continue to be during the plan period which is why we suggest that particular support is given to particular sizes and households to give a "direction of travel" to developers, but do not require specific percentages of dwelling type or size.

Policy H3 sets out requirements relating to affordable housing. Affordable houses will be dwellings provided by Sedgemoor District Council, a Registered Provider (formerly a Housing Association) or a Community Land Trust (CLT). We are satisfied that affordable housing proportions should be delivered in accordance with those set by the Local Plan. We have supplemented Local Plan policy with local requirements to help ensure that locally generated needs are fully addressed. Housing mix and type should respond positively to an up-to-date understanding of need and the direction of travel set by Policy H2. Our evidence²³ suggests that the appropriate housing type, tenures and size are as follows.



An off-site contribution to provision of affordable housing elsewhere (outside of the Parish) is not generally supported, since the funding can often be diverted to projects elsewhere in

²³ See the Housing Needs Assessment, available to view here <https://puritonparishcouncil.org/neighbourhood-plan/>

Sedgemoor, which provides no benefit to Puriton residents. For this reason, Policy H3 regards an off-site contribution as only being applicable in exceptional cases. In such cases, it is for the applicant to demonstrate a suitable site or project as the recipient of the off-site contribution.

Sites which come forward outside of the defined built-up area boundary of Puriton village and are not allocated in this Plan should be considered within the context of the policies in the Local Plan. In particular, Local Plan policy T2b requires that where, following allocated development, “...there remains an unmet local affordable housing need, mixed tenure affordable and market housing proposals on sites specifically released for that purpose will be supported outside but well related to settlement boundaries only where it is demonstrated that it meets all...” of a detailed set of criteria. In addition, our policy below requires that the local site assessment and District Council Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment (SHLAA) should also be taken into account when determining the appropriateness (or not) of a proposal which meets the requirements of Local plan policy T2b.

Our policy H4 sets a local lettings policy. This localises the provision of new affordable housing by prioritising it for people resident in the parish, thus providing a positive response to the community’s views of needs for local people. If there are no residents within the parish or households in need with a local connection which need to access affordable housing provided as part of a new development, the catchment area for eligibility is widened according to Homefinder Somerset rules.

POLICY H2: HOUSING MIX

- 1. Housing developments should provide a range of housing sizes, types and tenures within the site with a focus on delivery of one, two and three bedroom houses suitable for young people, young families and older people, including a proportion of single storey properties.**
- 2. The mix of dwelling sizes should reflect the findings of the Housing Needs Assessment (HNA) of around:**
 - i) 30% of dwellings comprising 1 bedroom;**
 - ii) 43% of dwellings comprising 2 bedrooms;**
 - iii) 19% of dwellings comprising 3 bedrooms;**
 - iv) 3% of dwellings comprising 4 bedrooms; and,**

v) 5% of dwellings comprising 5 or more bedrooms.

3. Proposals should also be informed by updated data, where available, after this Plan has been Made from the Local Planning Authority's Strategic Housing Market Assessment (SHMA) and / or a new local HNA during the Plan period.

POLICY H3: AFFORDABLE HOUSING

1. Affordable housing will be provided in accordance with policies in the Local Plan.
2. Any sites that come forward under Local Plan Policy T2b for mixed tenure affordable and market housing should have appropriate regard to the Puriton Neighbourhood Plan's 'Site Assessments' evidence base, ensuring the constraints and planning considerations raised in relation to available sites are adequately addressed.
3. On all sites where affordable housing is required, the tenure split will reflect Policy H2 and the latest up-to-date District or Parish-wide Housing Needs Assessment, whichever is more recent. Where such assessments are more than 3 years out of date at the time of the proposal's application, developers should demonstrate how the proposed tenure split on the site meets local needs across affordable housing tenures.
4. An off-site contribution for sites of 10 or more homes (or 0.5 hectares or more) will only be supported in exceptional circumstances if it can be demonstrated that it cannot reasonably be delivered on site and that will be invested in a specific affordable housing project elsewhere in Puriton Parish, where there is unmet local need as set out in Policy H4.

POLICY H4: MEETING LOCAL AFFORDABLE HOUSING NEEDS (LOCAL LETTINGS)

1. To help ensure that local residents or those with a connection to the parish can remain or move back to Puriton, all qualifying housing developments will be expected to deliver at least the minimum levels of affordable housing as detailed in the adopted Local Plan (subject to viability).
2. For any new affordable housing unit provided in the Plan area, initial priority (and subsequent future allocation of the affordable home) will be given to eligible

households who are in housing need (defined in 4. below) and which have the following local connection with the Plan area:

- i) currently live (and have done for 5 or more years) in the Plan area; or,
- ii) previously lived for 5 years or more (within the previous 10 years) in the Plan area; or,
- iii) work for 16 hours or more per week within the Plan area; or,
- iv) Have immediate family (that is child(ren), sibling(s), parent(s) or grandparent(s)) who currently live in the Plan area, and have done so for 5 or more years; or,
- v) Provides or receives care for immediate family (as defined in iv) in the Plan area.

3. Should any affordable homes be left unallocated after exhausting the above preferred options, unallocated affordable homes will be allocated in accordance with the Homefindersomerset housing policy and rules (or any subsequent replacement).

4. For the purposes of this policy, a household is considered to be housing need if it is assessed as being an emergency, gold or silver band household in accordance with the Homefindersomerset housing policy and rules (or any subsequent replacement), plus applicants with no dependent children and are lodging with friends or family or living in accommodation with shared living facilities. In areas outside of the settlement boundary and away from allocated housing sites (that is on “exception sites” in the countryside) this is extended to applicants in the bronze band. (see <https://www.homefindersomerset.co.uk/content/Information/Prioritisingapplications>).

6.5 Land South of Woolavington Road

6.5.1 Policy Justification

An outline planning application has received planning permission in May 2022 from Sedgemoor District Council (SDC reference 42/20/00014) for development of land south of Woolavington Road. In summary, the proposal comprises “...up to 120 dwellings with public open space, structural planting and landscaping, surface water flood mitigation and attenuation, and vehicular access point from Woolavington Road (all matters reserved except for means of vehicular access)”.

The site assessment process undertaken and then consulted on in the community identified the site as the preferred site for housing in the Parish²⁴. On this basis, we produced the Puriton Design Code²⁵ to guide the masterplanning of the site. The outline consent for the development includes a condition for the development to meet the requirements in the design code.

Map 2: Overall Masterplan included in Puriton Design Code



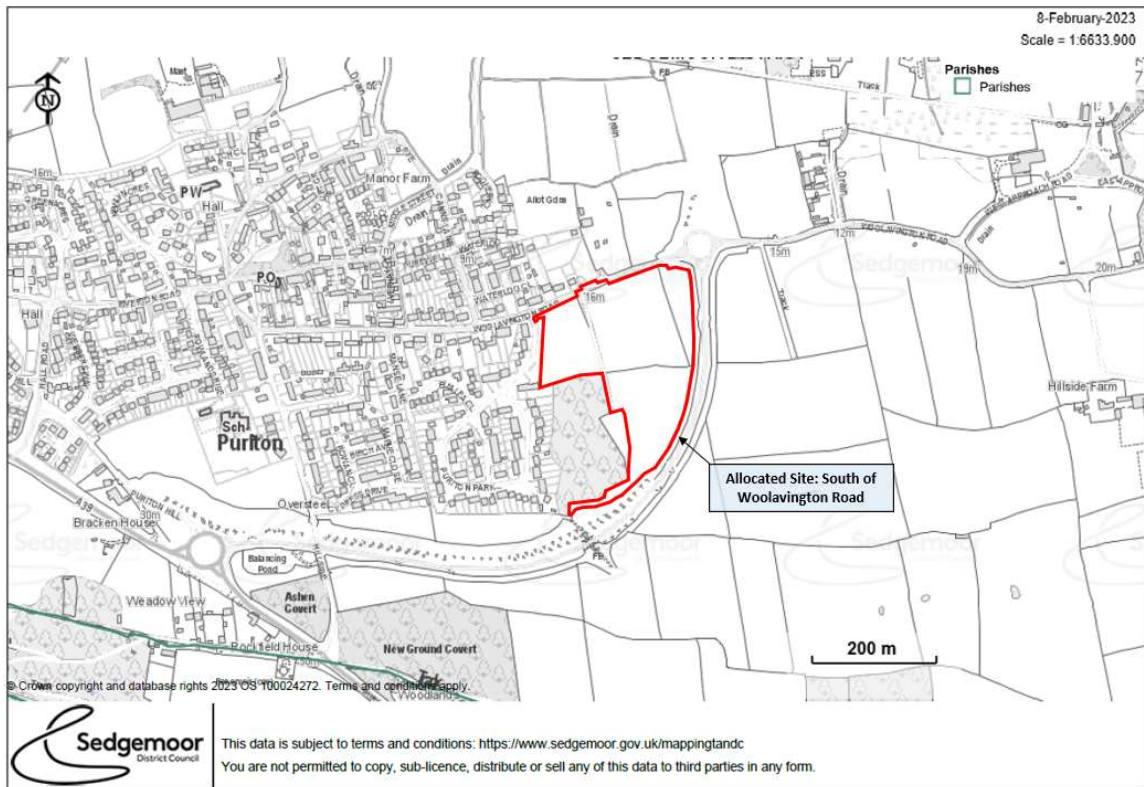
Source: Puriton Design Code

If the current outline permission lapses, this Plan asserts the community's and technical assessment's preference to see this site delivered over others in the Parish, with policy H5 below allocating the site for housing, setting out key criteria which should be considered, with further detail captured in the Puriton Design Code.

²⁴ See <https://puritonparishcouncil.org/neighbourhood-plan/> for further details including the technical assessment carried out by AECOM and site consultation results.

²⁵ See Appendix 1 and <https://puritonparishcouncil.org/neighbourhood-plan/> to view the Design Code.

Map 3: Land South of Woolavington Road (Allocated Site)



© crown copyright 2023 OS 100051603

POLICY H5: LAND SOUTH OF WOOLAVINGTON ROAD

1. Land South of Woolavington Road is allocated for development of around 120 dwellings as defined on Map 3.
2. Proposals should be informed by, respond to and take fully into account the Puriton Design Code, with particular reference to the treatment of the following aspects:
 - i) Walking and cycling;
 - ii) Traffic;
 - iii) Parking standards;
 - iv) Built form;
 - v) Materiality;
 - vi) Density and open space;
 - vii) Play and sport;
 - viii) Safe and attractive spaces;
 - ix) Flood risk;

- x) Topography and views;**
- xi) Urban to rural edges; and,**
- xii) Mitigation.**

3. Housing mix on-site should be informed by Policies H2 and H3 in this Plan.

7 Highways, Transport and Accessibility

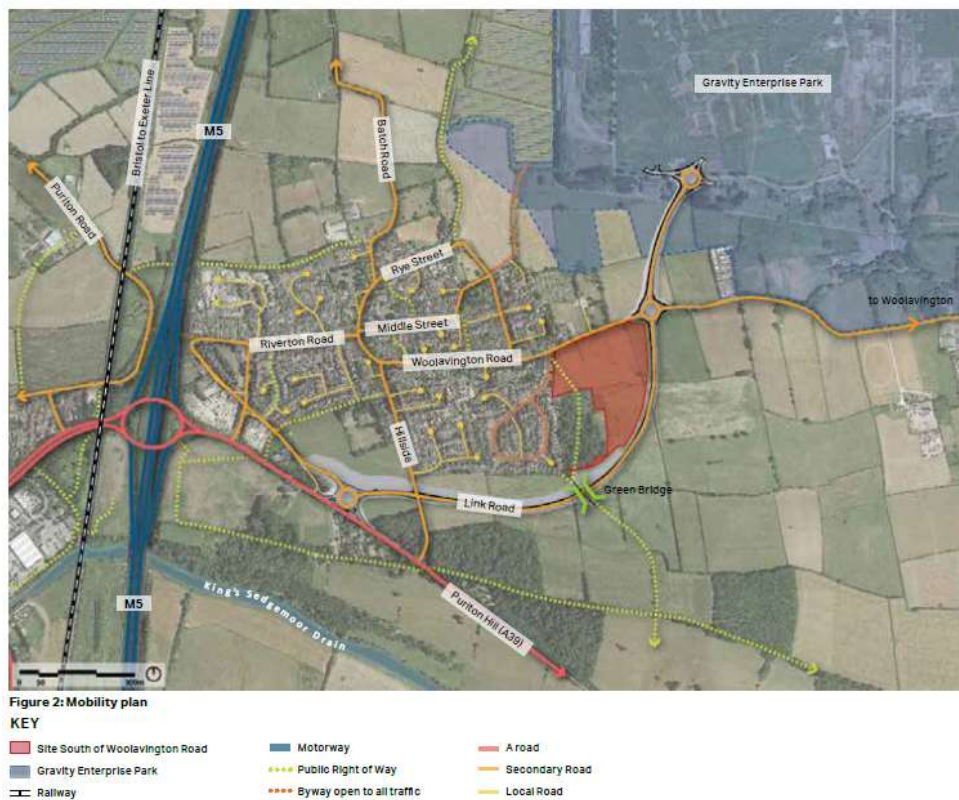
Objective

“To manage and control the impact of traffic through the location of future developments as well as by the appropriate use of speed restrictions, traffic calming, footpaths, cyclepaths, encouraging public and community transport and additional car parking with improved lighting and security.”

7.1 Introduction

As explained in the introduction to this Plan, the motorway (M5) and railway are two main transport arteries which pass through our parish dividing Puriton from Downend and Dunball, fortunately a footbridge and a minor road gives a relatively safer route for pedestrians and cyclist, but needs improving.

Map 4: Key Elements of the Transport Network: Down End, Dunball and Puriton Village



AECOM

Source: Puriton Design Code, p.28, AECOM, see <https://puritonparishcouncil.org/neighbourhood-plan/>

The motorway generally only impacts on the parish during times of disruption and it is accepted little can be done about this, or the pollution the Motorway causes. Gravity has shown interest in reopening the rail link into the former ROF site, this is to be encouraged as it would result in fewer HGVs in the area once redevelopment has taken place.



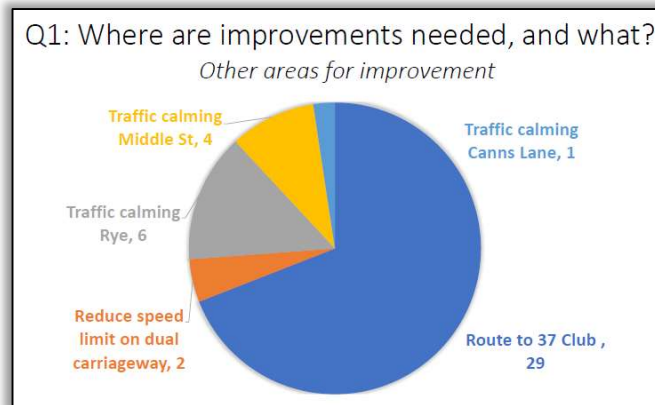
Southbound Slipway from M5

The Wharf at Dunball is underutilised.

Whilst Hanson retain the lease for the Wharf, and it has been used to land sand and gravel aggregate, it is currently non-operational. Further use by Coastal Shipping with general merchandise should be encouraged.

During consultation, the local community has told us, amongst other things, that:

- The pedestrian route from the village to the 37 Club requires improvement, being the most favoured improvement with controls on traffic speed making up just over one quarter of community survey responses. The Puriton to Woolavington



Road was identified as a particular problem and a suggested 30mph limit could be introduced with traffic calming measures, lighting at least as far as 37 Club (former ROF Western approach road). Also, a dedicated safe walking/cycle route between the two villages²⁶;

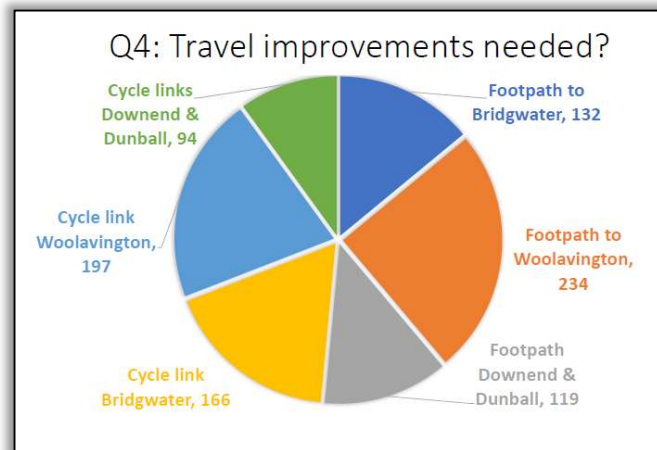
- Parking issues were highlighted as important to the majority of respondents to the

²⁶ It should be noted that the approved Village Enhancement Scheme will deliver a new pedestrian route between Puriton and Woolavington including up to the location of the 37 Club. It should also be noted that the 37 Club will remain open as long as possible in the existing location. A section 106 obligation is in place tied to the planning permission granted by the Gravity LDO to replace facilities prior to demolition of the existing 37 Club.

community survey, although many comments supported the improvement of enforcement and other restrictions on parking (which are outside the control of the planning system to implement). Within this context though, 45% of respondents did support improvements to off-street parking provision;

- Several cycle and footpath routes received support with routes from Puriton to Woolavington proving most popular;

- The following roads were identified by the community survey as having similar high traffic and pedestrian usage: Woolavington Road; Hillside Road; Riverton Road; and, Downend (Pawlett/Puriton Road). Our survey response suggested the following



improvements for these routes: 20 mph speed limit; traffic calming measures; a weight limit (7.5t); and, pedestrian crossings and dropped curbs.

- 78% of respondents use public transport and more frequent and cheaper services were cited as the measures most likely to result in more use of public transport. Bridgwater is the most popular destination among respondents.

From our written evidence base, the key messages can be summarised as follows:

- The Gravity site will be accessed via a new access road from the A39 and rail connection will be made to the main line. The strategic design code for the Gravity site suggests that it will be a well-connected place with an efficient movement network. It will be “• A highly connected place benefitting from strategic transport improvements supported by a comprehensive on-site mobility strategy. • A clear movement hierarchy that supports intuitive wayfinding and creates a comfortable and safe environment for micromobility. • Separation of freight access and smart mobility routes (e-bikes, scooters). • A network of safe and attractive routes facilitates alternative access to all parts of the site and connects surrounding communities.”²⁷

²⁷ See Gravity Strategic Design Code, p.6.

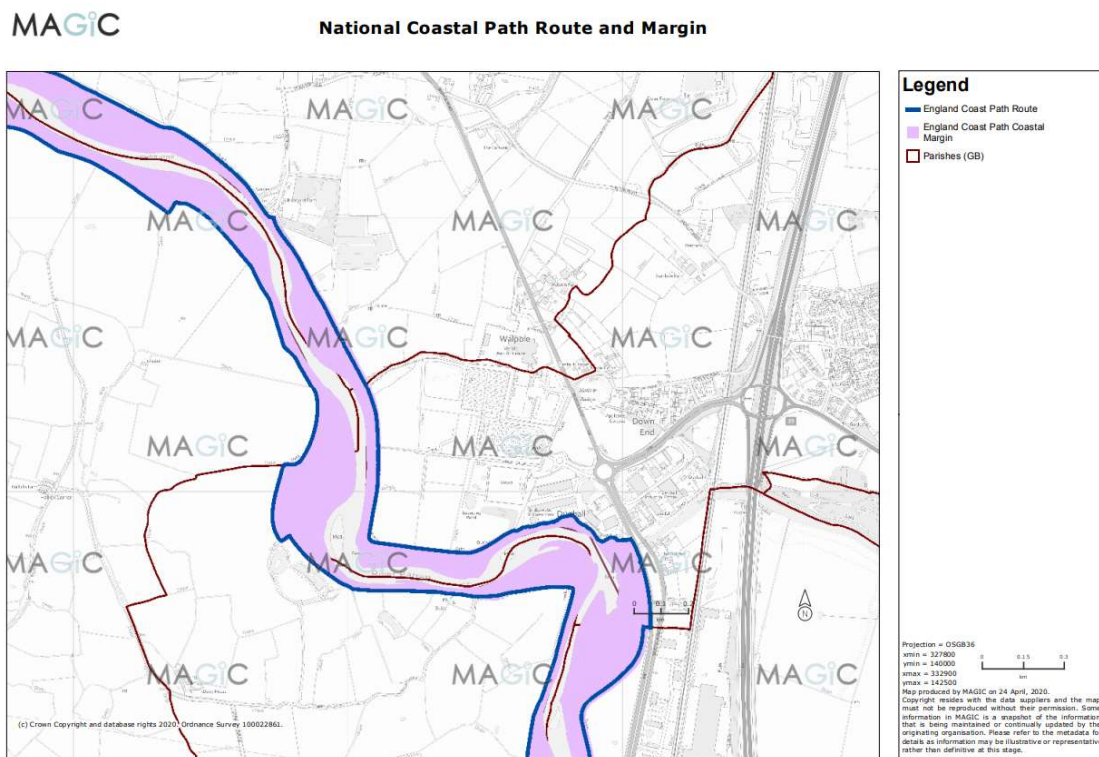
- Additional traffic resulting from new housing and industrial development can be minimised if development is in locations and has good connectivity to where people have the opportunity to walk or cycle rather than use the car.
- Inhabitants of Puriton Parish appreciate the facilities and services their community has to offer. However, access to public transport is limited and consequently there is a high reliance on car usage. This causes issues with parking on roads in the village.
- There is a reasonably good network of footpaths within and outside of Puriton village (see Maps 5 and 6) although there are opportunities for improvements to be made for safer accessibility and greater access for leisure and recreation purposes.

Map 5: Public Rights of Way in Puriton



© crown copyright 2021 OS 100051603

Map 6: National Coastal Path



© crown copyright 2021 OS 100051603

Source: <https://magic.defra.gov.uk/>

7.2 Highways, Transport and Accessibility Policies Summary

Responding to the consultation responses from the community and our evidence base, our policies below focus on areas where it is considered additional policies are required and add value (and do not simply repeat) the policies of the Local Plan. They therefore focus on providing a framework which seeks to respond positively to Local Plan policies by adding a layer of policy detail of particular relevance to Puriton parish. The policies seek to identify and / or address key transport and accessibility issues and problems and also to mitigate the potential impact of new development on these and / or provide solutions.

7.3 Improving Transport, Accessibility and Connectivity

7.3.1 Policy Justification

Having outlined the key issues for transport and accessibility in the parish above, we are clear that the whole wide range of transport issues are not something over which the Plan nor planning system has complete control and other services such as the County Highways

Authority, District Council and Police also play a role. For example, parking enforcement, limiting the amount of traffic which passes through the village, measures such as speed bumps and speed cameras are all issues and measures over which the Plan will have no direct control.

The focus of our approach is therefore based on identifying projects which require action during the Plan period and also on supporting the implementation of proposals which already have planning permission²⁸, and which we consider still require policy support should the permission lapse during the Plan period.

The key transport issues which we will seek to address as projects outside of this Neighbourhood Plan are as follows:

- i) Parking issues affecting all roads in the village but with Middle Street, Woolavington Road, Riverton Road & Hillside particular problem areas;
- ii) Parking restricted areas (by double yellow lines and school hatched areas) could be more rigorously enforced, perhaps consideration to time limit or resident parking zones²⁹;
- iii) The Puriton to Downend, Dunball and Bridgwater priority footpath and cycle route to improve safe crossing of a busy road and increase opportunities for safe walking and cycling;
- iv) The Puriton to Woolvington footpath and cycle route to improve safe crossing of a busy road and increase opportunities for safe walking and cycling;
- v) Improvement of the pedestrian route from the village to the 37 Club;
- vi) Parent and child school drop-off point;
- vii) Increasing the width of existing footpaths subject to feasibility;
- viii) Pedestrian and cycleway connections to Puriton village and through the parish from the Gravity site.
- ix) The Village Enhancement Scheme³⁰ suggests other improvements to the footpath and cycle network, which should also be seen as an opportunity to increase the green infrastructure network and movement and foraging corridors for wildlife and biodiversity.

The agreed plan of improvements in the village which already have permission (the Village Enhancement Scheme) and which captures many of the above projects listed, and which we support through our policy below, are shown in Appendix 2.

²⁸ Planning application reference number 42/20/00022.

²⁹ This issue is also raised as part of the Parish Council 4 year plan (2019 - 2023).

³⁰ The "transport plan" referenced is formed of the approved plans for village enhancements as detailed in planning application 42/20/00022 in relation to the Gravity development.

POLICY HTA1: IMPROVING TRANSPORT, ACCESSIBILITY AND CONNECTIVITY

1. Planning proposals which are for or help to address the key transport issues and concerns identified in this Plan will be supported where they:

- i) deliver identified opportunities and / or resolve identified constraints;**
- ii) do not exacerbate identified constraints; and,**
- iii) satisfactorily mitigate adverse impacts which arise from the proposal.**

2. Proposals should, where feasible and appropriate, increase opportunities to improve connectivity of and between existing and new areas of green infrastructure where those areas serve a recreational / leisure use and / or act as local habitats for wildlife and biodiversity.

3. Proposals for village transport enhancements with planning permission (planning application reference 42/20/00022 and reproduced in Appendix 2) are supported and remain the priority for transport enhancements where the permission lapses or alternative proposals are presented during the Plan period.

4. Where feasible and relevant, proposals should incorporate suitable Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDS) to provide wider benefits to biodiversity and amenity value, as well as enhanced management of surface water runoff.

7.4 Public Access Around the Parish

7.4.1 Policy Justification

Policy HTA2 seeks to protect against loss of public footpaths, bridleways and other non-vehicular routes. While rights of way have protection through statute, we feel it is important to reinforce such protections through the planning system with our policy, which relates directly to the potential impacts of development on those rights of way and sets criteria for new and improved rights of way in relation to provision of adequate access. The policy supports the provision of or contribution towards the delivery of new routes, and references, in particular, support for provision of safe pedestrian and cycle access across the A38 from Downend Road to complete a link from Puriton through Downend and the committed delivery of a cycle path to Bridgwater along the A38 route.

POLICY HTA2: PUBLIC ACCESS AROUND THE PARISH

1. Development proposals which result in the loss of public footpaths, bridleways and cycle-paths will not normally be supported.

2. Proposals for, on or affecting existing or new rights of way, and other public non-vehicular routes will be supported where they:

- i) help to increase opportunities for recreational access to and within the countryside;**
- ii) better link existing areas of green infrastructure and Local Green Space used for recreational purposes;**
- iii) help to retain and enhance safe and easy pedestrian and cycle access to local amenities including the sports centre, village hall, school, village convenience shops and services and the post office;**
- iv) help to provide and maintain a safe and suitable cycle path network to support and encourage commuting to work and recreational use, both within the parish and as part of the wider cycle route network;**
- v) provide safe routes with appropriate lighting, where necessary, while minimising light pollution;**
- vi) not compromise local amenity;**
- vii) have no adverse impact on landscape or built character (or such impacts are satisfactorily mitigated); and,**
- viii) meet the most up-to-date standards of design.**

3. Proposals which provide a safe pedestrian and cycle route from Downend Road across the A38 will be supported.

4. Where feasible and relevant, proposals should incorporate suitable Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDS) (particularly through green infrastructure and open green spaces) to provide wider benefits to biodiversity and amenity value, as well as enhanced management of surface water runoff.

8 Local Facilities and Amenities

Objective

“To maintain, protect, enhance and expand the range of community services, amenities, civic open spaces and facilities in Puriton Parish to meet the needs of all sections of the community.”

8.1 Introduction

As set out in earlier sections of this Plan, the parish is fortunate to be served by a good range of local facilities and amenities. These include the village hall, Puriton Sports Centre, Puriton primary school, The Church of St Michael and All Angels, The Puriton Inn, Court Farm butcher, Post Office and the Cutting Room hairdressers, as well as a wealth of other trades and services owned and operated by those living in the village.

As referenced earlier in this Plan, the sports centre plays a significant role, not only in local provision, but a wider strategic role across an area wider than the Parish itself. The emerging Sedgemoor Built Sports Facilities Strategy supports investment and refurbishment of the sports centre as a priority. The sports

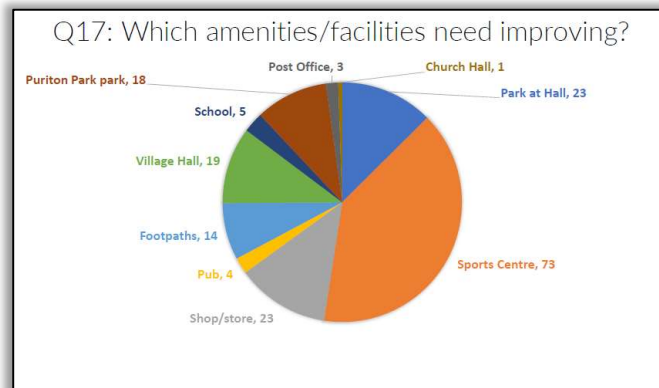
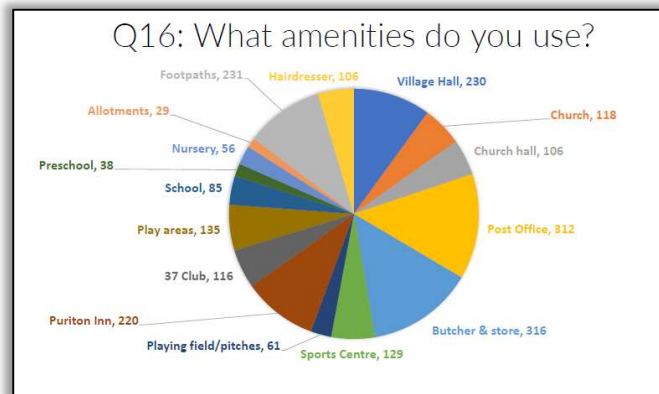


St Michael and All Angel's Church

centre is run as a charitable trust by volunteers for the benefit of the community. The sports centre offers indoor bowls, archery, target shooting, a youth club, football and cricket pitches. It also has for hire a committee room and a function room with an equipped kitchen. Puriton Village Hall is also charitable trust run for the benefit of the community. The hall is a real hub of social activity and has a full calendar of events, hosting local groups such as the Brownies, Sunshine Pre-School, the Puriton players. The hall has plenty of free parking. There is a grassed field and a play area alongside with a fenced area for ball games.

During consultation, the local community has told us, amongst other things, that:

- Most of the facilities and amenities in the parish are well-used including commercially run “services” such as the butcher and store, post office and the Puriton Inn. Those not provided on a purely commercial basis but which rely on continuing use for viability in whole or in part which are well-used include the village hall, 37 club, play areas and sports centre. These figures correlate well with those amenities and facilities which the community felt are important.



- Of the local facilities and amenities, respondents suggested that the facility which is in most need of improvement is the sports centre, which received the most support over others.

8.2 Local Facilities and Amenities Policies Summary

Responding to the consultation responses from the community and our evidence base, our policies below focus on areas where it is considered additional policies are required and add value (and do not simply repeat) the policies of the Local Plan. They therefore focus on providing a framework which seeks to respond positively to Local Plan policies by adding a layer of policy detail of particular relevance to Puriton parish. The policies seek to protect named community and education facilities, amenities and assets which have been identified by the community and / or by our evidence base as having particular value and also support the enhancement of existing and provision of new facilities, assets and amenities to support demand and need in the community.

8.3 Community Facilities, Amenities and Assets

8.3.1 Policies Justification

Puriton has a range of community and recreational facilities and these need to be protected from loss. However, consultation also highlighted a need for more facilities for teenagers. The Parish Council currently has a couple of proposed projects including a Youth Club. A Pump Track was installed at the Sports Centre in 2021.

Facilities and amenities that have been identified as needing improving include:

- the Sports Centre - which could do with better access and parking, a gym and a fitness track on the field. Opportunities to improve and enhance provision at the sports centre are supported as a priority, particularly given the wider strategic role that the facility plays in addition to serving residents of the parish (demonstrated in the emerging Sedgemoor District Council Built Sports Facilities Strategy 2022);
- the Village Hall – it would be better if it was bigger, CCTV, a greater community focus, craft courses etc, for more community involvement;
- the parks at Puriton Park and at the Village Hall – a wider range of equipment available for all ages and abilities, CCTV and Flood lights; and,
- other facilities identified that would benefit from enhancement were: The Pub, Footpaths, Church Hall, Post office, Shop/Store.

Further suggestions for facilities that residents would like include a Youth Centre, Skate Park, a Coffee Shop, Doctors Surgery and a Pharmacy. It is recognised, however, that some of these are private businesses or classed as such and demand would need to be present for them to prove viable.

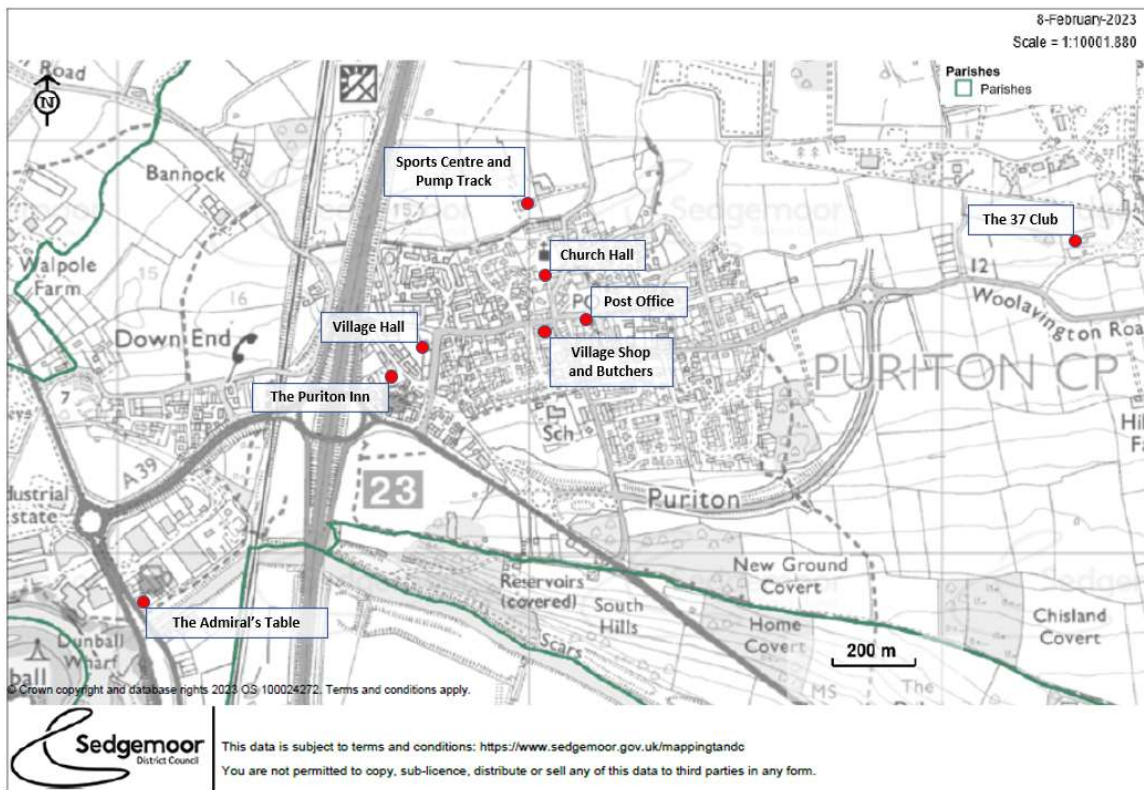
Our policies in this section are designed to help protect what is valued and well-used and serves a community interest and also help to support improvements to existing and provision of new facilities, but not at any cost to the village or wider parish. We have established a set of criteria for proposals to be measured against and to pass for them to be acceptable.



Pump Track

The planning permission for the Gravity site includes a section 106 planning obligation to replace the existing 37 Club with facilities prior to the demolition of the existing facility, which will remain open for as long as possible. Policy LFA1 which follows identifies the 37 Club as a community facility which requires protection, but it is acknowledged that the policy tests set in LFA1 have already been met by the planning consent. It is considered reasonable, therefore, to retain the 37 Club in the policy to ensure that the policy's tests are applied if the consent lapses. Map 8 identifies the locally valued assets which the community wishes to see protected and / or enhanced.

Map 8: Valued Local Community Facilities, Amenities and Assets



© crown copyright 2023 OS 100051603

In addition, there are a number of issues and opportunities related to the primary school. Levels of traffic and parking on surrounding roads during school drop-off and collection times are relatively high (particularly on Rowlands Rise, but also to a degree on Webbers Way and Hillside) and lead to local congestion during these peak times. This issue, together with a current deficit in outdoor provision for play and sport, the potential need for the school to increase capacity (either indoor or outdoor) to accommodate additional children from the

potential new development south of Woolavington Road and introduce more flexible play-time and outdoor activity / learning space following lessons learnt from the coronavirus pandemic, suggests a need for additional land to be used adjacent to the school to resolve some of these challenges.

We understand that there could be concerns about improving the ability of the site to accommodate traffic and parking on-site being seen as promoting the use of the private car, and therefore going against the very clear need to reduce the use of cars for short journeys in particular to reduce air pollution, carbon emissions and improve health through an increase in cycling and walking to school. However, the proposals to help improve the ability of the school site to play a role in dealing with traffic which otherwise just spills out onto local residential roads are seen as a practical solution which can also improve road safety for children walking and cycling to school, by removing frustrations of drivers in the area at peak school times caused by local congestion. Not providing the opportunity to cater better for cars will not, on its own lead to reduced use of cars. While some local journeys for the school run could be reduced, many will already likely take place on the way to other destinations, such as parents' work, shopping or leisure activities and these journeys will likely continue. We also suggest that, in order to positively affect what is known as "modal shift" from use of the car in local journeys to cycling and walking, "carrots" as well as "sticks" must be used in unison to achieve the goal. We would suggest, therefore, that partners involved in any changes to the school site, work together to find a package of solutions which deliver both an improvement to the circulation and ability of the school site to deal with traffic on the site in relation to the local road network, while also incentivising parents and children to walk and cycle where they can. For example, travel plans, improved public transport, school streets initiatives³¹, using the "Mode Shift Stars" programme³², improving safe cycle and footpath links, and educating children, parents and staff (focusing on road safety, climate change / decarbonisation, active lifestyles, health, cycle skills and confidence and so on) can all be used to have a positive impact on journey choices. Some of these could be set in place through planning conditions or agreements attached to a planning permission, but there will be other ways of also achieving positive changes.

The existing school site can also provides a reserve or contingency position should the new

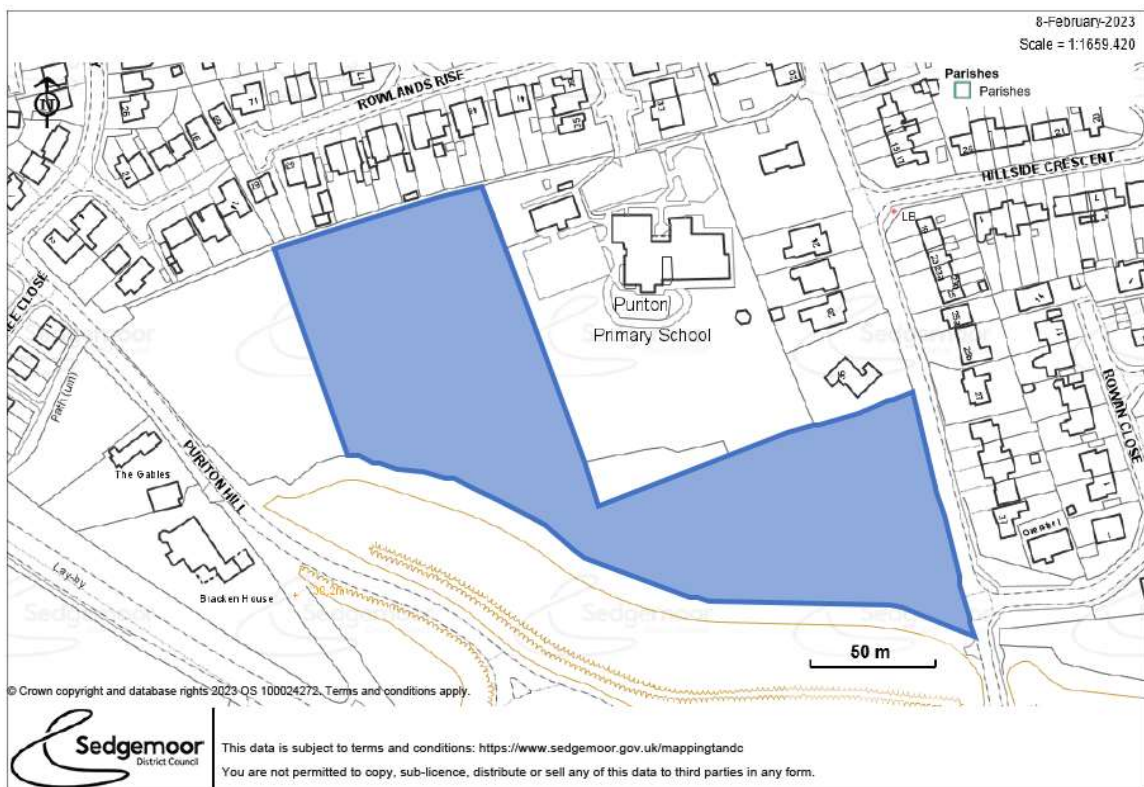
³¹ See <http://schoolstreets.org.uk/>

³² See <https://modeshiftstars.org/>

school proposed as part of the Gravity development not be delivered for any reason. If a new school does not come forward, additional school places will be required in Puriton and the existing school presents the most logical solution. For this reserve position to be realistic, land around the school needs to be safeguarded (protected) from other forms of development, prioritising education uses. There is yet no masterplan in place for the configuration of any extension to the school, but in light of this, and discussion with the Local Education Authority following their representation made at the Pre-submission consultation stage (where the Plan had proposed to safeguard 0.5 ha to accommodate more car parking and internal traffic circulation space only), we propose to safeguard around 1.5ha (net available, for use for buildings, playing fields and any other necessary infrastructure on the site) adjacent to the school. Due to the slightly awkward shape of the land around the school, the gross area of land to be safeguarded needs to be greater than the net figure of 1.5ha, with the area proposed for safeguarding in Map 9 being around 1.9ha.

The Plan therefore designates an area of land to the south of the school to be safeguarded for future development of these potential necessary improvements.

Map 9: Safeguarded Land South of Puriton Primary School



POLICY LFA1: PROTECTING COMMUNITY FACILITIES, AMENITIES AND ASSETS

1. Our locally valued community facilities and amenities are identified on Map 8 and are:

- i) Puriton Village Hall;**
- ii) Puriton Church Hall;**
- iii) Puriton Village Shop and Butchers;**
- iv) The Puriton Inn;**
- v) The 37 Club;**
- vi) The Admiral's Table;**
- vii) Puriton Village Post Office; and,**
- viii) Puriton Sports Centre and Pump Track.**

2. Existing community facility and amenity buildings will be protected for such use and their loss will not normally be supported. Proposals which result in the loss (redevelopment or change of use) of locally valued community facilities and amenities will only be supported where:

- i) there is no reasonable prospect of viable continued use of the existing building or facility which will benefit the local community and they demonstrate a need for their proposed change;**
- ii) alternative provision of a similar nature and use exists elsewhere in the Parish which accommodates local needs and satisfies local demand;**
- iii) they do not have a significant adverse impact on the character of the area's natural and built environments (or such impacts can be satisfactorily mitigated);**
- iv) the proposal is for replacement of the existing facility and meets the requirements in policy LFA2; and,**
- v) the proposal meets the requirements of Local Plan Policy D35.**

3. Where feasible and relevant, proposals should incorporate suitable Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDS) to provide wider benefits to biodiversity and amenity value, as well as enhanced management of surface water runoff.

POLICY LFA2: MAINTAINING AND ENHANCING COMMUNITY FACILITIES, AMENITIES AND ASSETS

1. Development proposals for new, replacement, extended and/or improved community facilities and amenities will be supported where the proposal would not have significant adverse or unacceptable impact on the following (or such impacts can be satisfactorily mitigated):

- i) the amenity of nearby residents; and,**
- ii) the surrounding local environment (with regard to biodiversity, wildlife habitat and landscape character); and,**
- iii) the local road network (with regard to additional traffic volume / congestion, demand for parking, and pollution levels);**
and,
- iv) the proposed use will be dedicated, where appropriate, to community use in perpetuity; and,**
- v) are easily accessible to current users of the facility where the proposal includes replacement facilities, and all residents of Puriton Parish where the proposal includes new facilities.**

2. Proposers of development are encouraged to engage with the local community and Parish Council at the earliest opportunity to help ensure that any proposals take into account both this plan's aims and objectives, the needs of users and the views of the local community.

POLICY LFA3: SAFEGUARDING LAND ADJACENT TO PURITON PRIMARY SCHOOL

1. Land adjacent to the south and west of Puriton Primary School (defined on Map 9) will be safeguarded for future education use for one or more of the following potential uses:

- i) A drop-off and collect turning area to remove traffic causing congestion at the start and end of the school day on Hillside, Webbers Way and Rowlands Rise; and /or;**

- ii) Additional green open space; and / or;
- iii) Provision of a multi-use games area; and / or;
- iv) Additional indoor and / or covered teaching space; and / or,
- v) Other needs as identified for education purposes.



Post Office

9 Employment

Objectives

“To ensure that the redevelopment of the former ROF site does not give rise to any adverse impact upon the amenity of nearby residents or to the character, appearance and setting of the village.”

“To capitalise upon the economic and sustainable development benefits that will arise from the regeneration of the former ROF site for the benefit of the local community.”

“To help enable the provision of enhanced and additional employment space to support local small and start-up businesses and help young people to access local employment opportunities.”

9.1 Introduction

The economy of Puriton has changed over the 20th Century. Originally a farming community but during the First World War became home to the Royal Ordnance Factory (ROF) just outside the village. Puriton now has a mix of local inhabitants and commuters because of the M5 junction just to the west of the main village. Puriton has expanded its economy over the years. The village has also expanded in the last 2-3 years with the three new housing estates on the motorway side. There are two shops in the village, a butcher with a general store and a Post Office which also sells general goods, vegetables and groceries. The Post Office is also under new management. There is a busy hairdresser's and a nursery in the centre of the village. A village pub, the Puriton Inn, which is a vibrant and lively meeting place for villagers and visitors alike and has a busy restaurant.

The development of the old Royal Ordnance Factory site half a mile to the east is going to provide 4,000 new jobs over the next 20 years. There are small independent businesses between Puriton and Woolavington and farming is still a vital part of the village economy. The on-going construction of a by-pass to the new Gravity site is going to remove through traffic and heaving traffic from the village making it a more pleasant and safer environment to live in and to visit.

Dunball is an area of the Puriton parish which carries the A38 and borders the river Parrett.

There is a mix of industrial uses at Dunball, including warehouse and distribution units and a landing stage for aggregate and sand coming in by boat. There are approximately 20+ industrial units surrounding the main Dunball roundabout on the A38 and forming the junction with the dual carriageway up the M5 J23. Dunball also has a popular public house, The Admiral's Table, which offers food and



Dunball

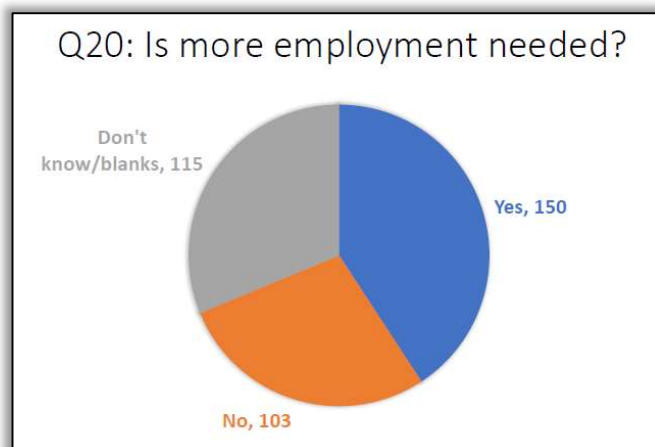
accommodation, on the A38. There is also a large park and ride area for Hinkley Point C workers and a new Filling Station with shop is in the process of being built and another one has just been granted planning permission by the Sedgemoor council for the opposite side of the roundabout, but there are still conditions attached. This second fuel station will back on to houses in Downend, and there are also two drive through units planned.

During consultation, the local community has told us, amongst other things, that:

- There was a mixed response to the need for employment in the parish in the questionnaire, as many villagers are already employed and commute to their place of work. When asked if more employment was needed in the village a third said they did not know, a third said no and a third said yes.
- Types of employment identified by the villagers as being needed included café, small supermarket, garage, small scale enterprises, small affordable industrial units, somewhere to learn traditional skills such as blacksmithing and thatching, care home, office work and technology jobs.

From both our written evidence base and consultation with local businesses, the key messages can be summarised as follows:

- There will be more employment opportunities for local people with the development at the Gravity site.



- Within the village, support is probably required for organic micro and small-scale business start-ups and home working, to complement the more strategic offer at Gravity when it comes forward.

9.2 Employment Policies Summary

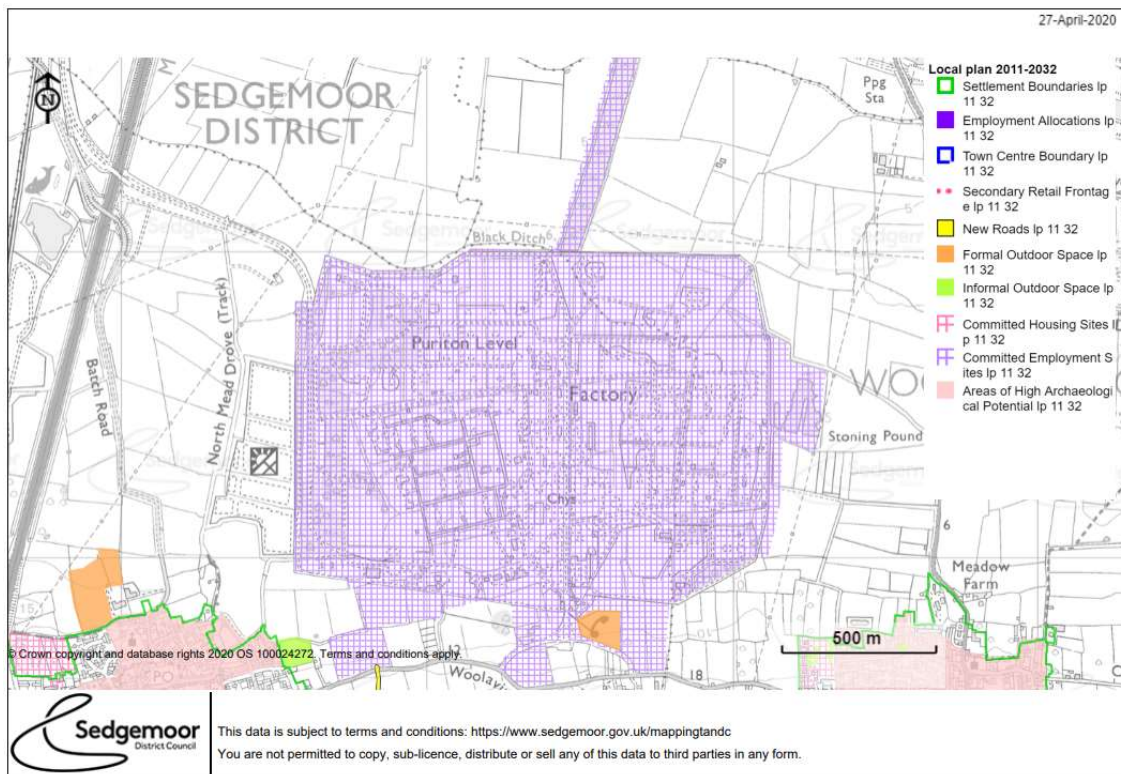
Responding to the consultation responses from the community and our evidence base, our policies below focus on areas where it is considered additional policies are required and add value (and do not simply repeat) the policies of the Local Plan. They therefore focus on additional policy requirements and criteria relating to the development of the ROF Gravity site and helping to support existing and new businesses suitable in the context of Puriton village and the scale likely to emerge within the parish and outside of the Gravity site.

9.3 Former Royal Ordnance Factory (ROF) / Gravity Redevelopment Site

9.3.1 Policies Justification

The ROF Gravity site is identified as an existing employment commitment in the adopted Local Plan and the site is identified as a potential Major Infrastructure Project (MIP) for energy generation under policy MIP1. Additionally, Gravity is also listed as a local project identified in the Bridgwater Vision that should be supported in line with Policy B1 Bridgwater Vision Transformational Projects. The site was granted outline planning permission in 2017 (which gives permission for the principle of the development for the uses it proposes) and the extent of that permission is reproduced below (see interactive inset map). It should be noted that not all of the site is within the Puriton Parish boundary.

Map 10: ROF / Gravity Site with Outline Permission



Source: Local Plan, <https://webmaps.sedgemoor.gov.uk/> (interactive online map)

Since adoption of the Local Plan, a Local Development Order³⁴ (LDO) has been put in place and adopted by Sedgemoor District Council. The Council's website states that the LDO "sets out a simplified planning process to facilitate the delivery of substantial commercial floorspace (up to 1.1 million sqm for an advanced manufacturing facility and smart campus including a wide range of supporting uses and associated infrastructure). Proposals coming forward that comply with the parameters and conditions of the LDO will not require any formal application for planning permission. The LDO therefore represents a streamlined, flexible and agile planning process for future occupiers." The LDO includes a design guide for the site to guide proposals within the area. The Design Guide sets out the parameters within which proposals should come forward, reproduced below.

³⁴ See <https://www.sedgemoor.gov.uk/GravityLDO> for further information.

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Land Use: establishes the distribution of permitted land uses across the site and maximum floorspace for each class. ■ Transport: Strategic Infrastructure: how the transport needs of Gravity should be achieved on site and integrated through good design. ■ Transport: Micromobility: how principles of micromobility should be integrated through the design process. ■ Building Heights: establishes maximum building heights. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Strategic Landscape: Establishes a strategic landscape framework to be followed in bringing forward any development. ■ Infrastructure and Utilities: Predominantly shows available site infrastructure underpinning the sites competitive advantage. ■ Demolition: Identifying the limited number of remaining buildings on site requiring demolition. This plan has not been included in the design guidance section of this document.
---	--

Source: Gravity LDO Design Guide, p.8, <https://www.sedgemoor.gov.uk/GravityLDO>

It is important to note that:

- an LDO does not supersede an extant permission and do not prevent further planning applications being made in the area³⁵;
- an LDO can be time limited or permanent;
- an LDO can be revoked or modified;
- despite having an LDO in place, development may still be liable for payment of the Community Infrastructure Levy; and,
- planning permission can still be granted in the normal manner in an area that has a LDO in effect. LDOs do not supersede any planning permissions that have already been granted in the area and nor do they stop the implementation of development that is covered by other permitted development rights.

The LDO also sets out a list of approved uses on the Gravity site. They are reproduced below for ease of reference.

³⁵ It should be noted that through the agreed s.106 attached to the LDO, the extant s.106 agreement as of the date of commencement of development will be cancelled and in all respects be superseded by the provisions of the LDO. No further development under the current planning consent will take place.

Use	Definition	Limitations
Advanced Manufacturing		
B2 / B8 / E(a – g) / Sul Generis	General Industrial Use	Total GEA of up to 1,000,000 m²
Supporting Employment Uses		
B2	General Industrial Use	Total GEA of up to 65,000 m²
B8	Storage or Distribution	
E (a) to (g)	Commercial, Business and Service	
Sul Generis	Uses which do not fall within the specified use classes above.	
Supporting Uses		
C1	Hotels, boarding and guest houses where no significant element of care is provided	Total GEA of up to 35,000 m²
C2	Residential Institutions	
E (a) to (g)	Commercial, Business and Service	
F	Local Community and Learning	
C3	Dwelling houses	Up to 750 dwellings

Source: Gravity LDO Design Guide, p.12, <https://www.sedgemoor.gov.uk/GravityLDO>

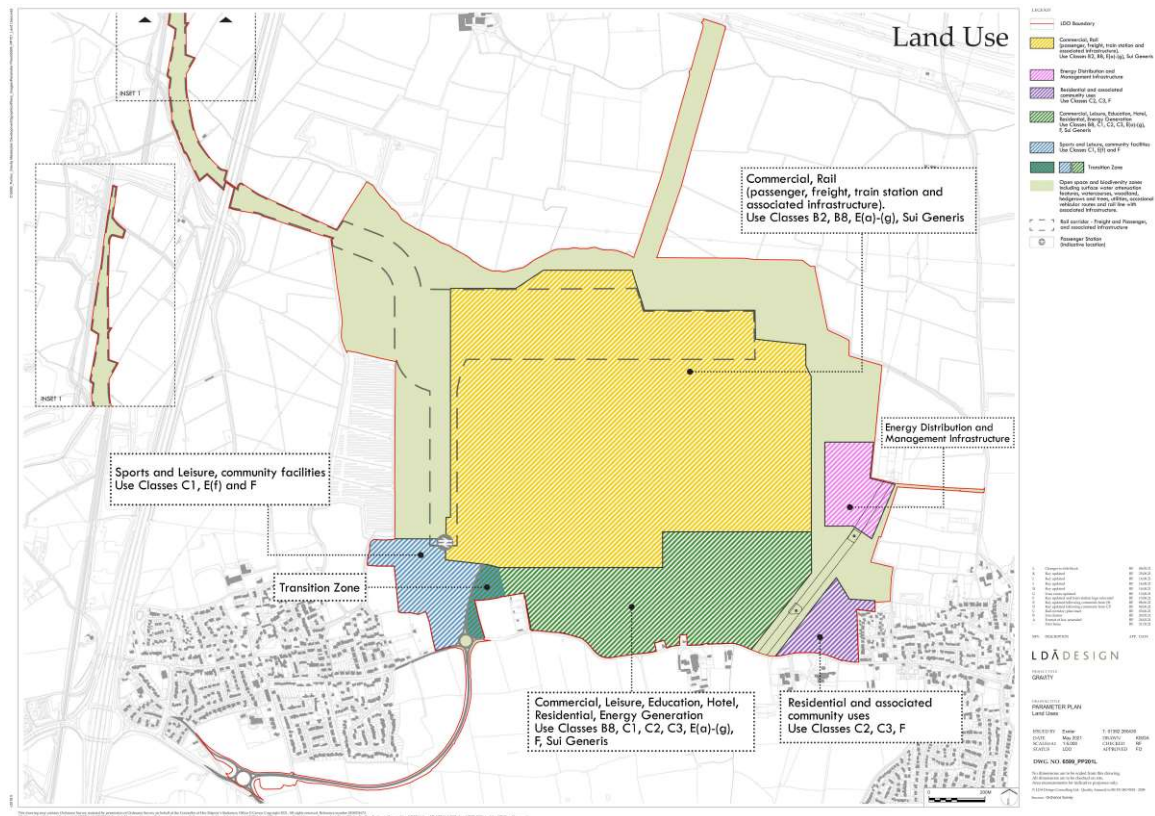
The approved list of uses includes up to 750 dwellings specifically tied to accommodating workers employed at the site. It is important to recognise that this number of additional dwellings/ households may have an impact on local and community infrastructure. Any identified impacts would be considered through the LDO compliance process and in addition any dwellings would be liable to pay the Community Infrastructure Levy that could be used to fund additional provision, for example (but not limited to), education / school, healthcare and community facilities.

While it seems unlikely, and the LDO will be in place for a total of 15 years, there is still potential that proposals could come forward outside of the parameters set out in the LDO.

Due to these above reasons, we consider that there is still a need to have planning policies in place which can be used to guide and respond to proposals if and when appropriate.

Our policies E1 to E3 therefore provide a positive planning policy framework in order to have influence over the details of future planning applications on the site, and how they impact on Puriton village in particular, should the LDO not continue to be in place after its 5th year review after its 15 year lifespan or proposals come forward outside of the parameters of the LDO. We acknowledge that these policies only have affect within the Neighbourhood Plan area boundary.

Map 11: Parameter Plan for Land Use at the ROF / Gravity Site



Source: Planning application documents online, Parameter Plan Land Use, application reference 95/21/00001, https://www.sedgemoor.gov.uk/planning_online?action=GetDetails&app=95/21/00001&p=

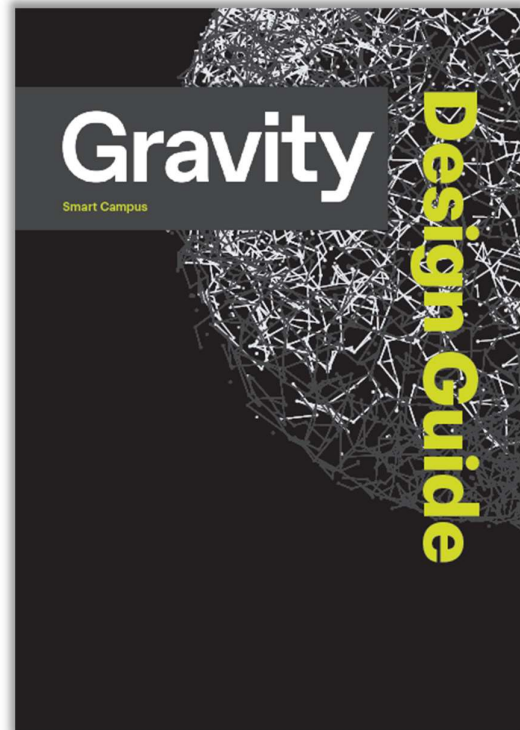
Policy E1 seeks to ensure that adverse impacts on the village' character and setting, the sustainability of our local economy and small businesses and on the community are avoided. It also directs the developers of the site to liaise directly with the local community to discuss proposals prior to Applications for Compliance with the LDO are submitted (which deal with detailed proposals on the site following outline permission) or additional planning applications

relating to development on the site. It should be noted that once development commences in accordance with the LDO, no further “reserved matters” applications can be made.

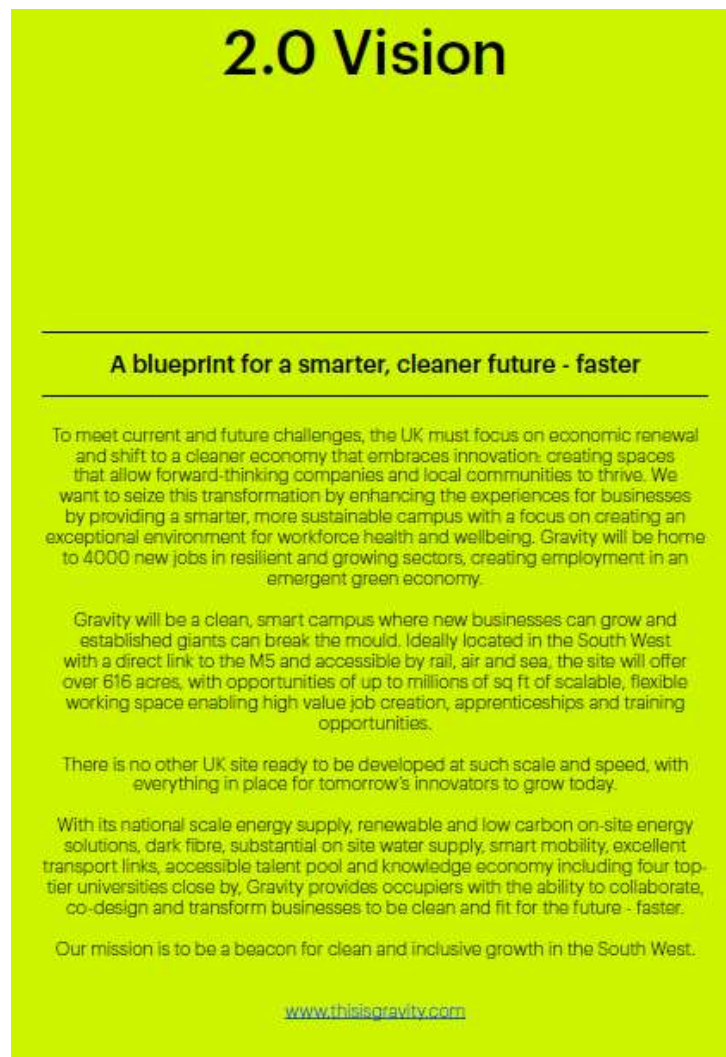
Policy E2 encourages and provides support to proposals which complement the local community and economic aspirations captured by this Plan. It also seeks to ensure that any proposed community, leisure and / or sports facilities and pitches are well-located in relation to the catchment of their users. For example, provision of playing pitches and sports facilities would be best made as close to Puriton village as possible. The policy also requires land on the site

to be retained for community use if demand and needs assessments (including but not limited to those undertaken specifically for reserved matters applications, the district council’s playing pitch strategy or built sports facility strategy) demonstrate that provision of facilities and / or playing pitches, indicated in the outline permission, are best located outside of the Parish. This will ensure that, even if a financial contribution is made to best fit existing demand, for example, to make improvements to accommodate demand on other existing (club) sites (such as rugby), the area of land which was set-aside for that sport, use or activity is retained for the benefit of the local community in Puriton Parish (and neighbouring communities such as Woolavington). Should contributions be deemed appropriate in lieu of on-site provision, consideration should first be given to existing sports clubs, facilities and pitches in Puriton Parish. This position is not considered to be unreasonable as a test to assess proposals. Some sports governing bodies prefer investment from strategic development to take place at existing club sites, even if this means that investment leaves the Parish and goes to another location. The test in Policy E2 requires proposals where this response could be triggered to properly consider the impact of loss of such investment to the local community to which the requirement for mitigation applies.

We welcome and are supportive of the vision (see extract from Gravity Strategic Design Code) and proposals on the Gravity site for a focus on low carbon development and solutions, the



importance of such proposals being emphasised more clearly than ever as essential in future development given net zero targets nationally and locally and the declaration of a climate change emergency in Somerset. The proposals, captured in Gravity's "Strategic Design Code" for a "smart" campus³⁷, can play a lead role in showcasing green technology, use of sustainable development principles and supporting active and healthy work and leisure balance lifestyles through major commercial developments. Policy E3 below therefore supports and reinforces the lead taken by the proposals for a sustainable commercial development on the site.



2.0 Vision

A blueprint for a smarter, cleaner future - faster

To meet current and future challenges, the UK must focus on economic renewal and shift to a cleaner economy that embraces innovation: creating spaces that allow forward-thinking companies and local communities to thrive. We want to seize this transformation by enhancing the experiences for businesses by providing a smarter, more sustainable campus with a focus on creating an exceptional environment for workforce health and wellbeing. Gravity will be home to 4000 new jobs in resilient and growing sectors, creating employment in an emergent green economy.

Gravity will be a clean, smart campus where new businesses can grow and established giants can break the mould. Ideally located in the South West with a direct link to the M5 and accessible by rail, air and sea, the site will offer over 616 acres, with opportunities of up to millions of sq ft of scalable, flexible working space enabling high value job creation, apprenticeships and training opportunities.

There is no other UK site ready to be developed at such scale and speed, with everything in place for tomorrow's innovators to grow today.

With its national scale energy supply, renewable and low carbon on-site energy solutions, dark fibre, substantial on site water supply, smart mobility, excellent transport links, accessible talent pool and knowledge economy including four top-tier universities close by, Gravity provides occupiers with the ability to collaborate, co-design and transform businesses to be clean and fit for the future - faster.

Our mission is to be a beacon for clean and inclusive growth in the South West.

[www.thisisgravity.com](http://thisisgravity.com)

³⁷ See <http://thisisgravity.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2020/07/Gravity-Strategic-Design-Code.pdf> . The Gravity design code frames proposals on the site within the context of 5 principles: a place for clean growth and innovations, a well-connected place with an efficient movement network, a place embedded in local landscape and ecology, a distinctive place with 3 character areas and a park at its heart, and a flexible adaptable place for leisure, work and community.

POLICY E1: REDEVELOPMENT OF THE FORMER ROYAL ORDNANCE FACTORY (ROF) / GRAVITY SITE (OUTWITH THE LOCAL DEVELOPMENT ORDER)

1. Development proposals (within the Plan area) which come forward and which meet the requirements of the Local Development Order (LDO) are supported. Proposals which fall outside of the LDO, in terms of use or the LDO area, and which occur if the LDO expires, and proposals for any additional or alternative development of the site should not result in significant adverse impact on the following (or such impacts can be satisfactorily mitigated):

- i) The amenity enjoyed by neighbouring uses or residents, including, but not limited to light, air quality and noise pollution;**
- ii) The landscape setting of the site, with particular regard to the landscape character on edge of the village and the built character of the village; and,**
- iii) The retail and service provision provided within Puriton village, where any new retail or service offer on the ROF site could result in loss of current provision of a similar offer in the village or lead to an increase in short journeys made by private motor vehicles out of the village.**

2. Proposers of development are encouraged to engage with the local community and Parish Council at the earliest opportunity to help ensure that any proposals take into account both this Plan's aims and objectives, the needs of users and the views of the local community.

POLICY E2: MAXIMISING THE BENEFITS FROM THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE FORMER ROYAL ORDNANCE FACTORY (ROF) / GRAVITY SITE (OUTWITH THE LOCAL DEVELOPMENT ORDER)

1. Development proposals (within the Plan area) which fall outside of the LDO, in terms of use or the LDO area, and which occur if the LDO expires, and proposals for any additional or alternative development of the site, will be supported where they enable benefits to the local community from the regeneration of the former Royal Ordnance Factory (ROF) / Gravity Site (defined in the Gravity Local Development Order), through the creation of additional employment and community facility infrastructure where they are consistent with other relevant development plan policies.

POLICY E3: SUPPORTING LOW CARBON PRINCIPLES AT THE FORMER ROYAL ORDNANCE FACTORY (ROF) / GRAVITY SITE (OUTWITH THE LOCAL DEVELOPMENT ORDER)

1. Development proposals and reserved matters (within the Plan area) submitted for approval on the former Royal Ordnance Factory / Gravity site which fall outside of the LDO, in terms of use or the LDO area, and which occur if the LDO expires, and proposals for any additional or alternative development of the site, will be supported where they:

- i) Meet original concept proposals for a “smart” campus in the “Gravity Strategic Design Code”; and,
- ii) Fulfil the positive commitments to development which embed the 5 masterplanning principles and codes identified in the Gravity Strategic Design Code, with a particular focus on a proactive response to meeting the challenges faced from a changing climate, including contributions to reaching net zero carbon emissions targets and achieving net gains in biodiversity through on-site ecological measures.

9.4 Small Scale Employment Opportunities to Support the Local Economy and Protecting Existing Employment Areas

9.4.1 Policy Justification

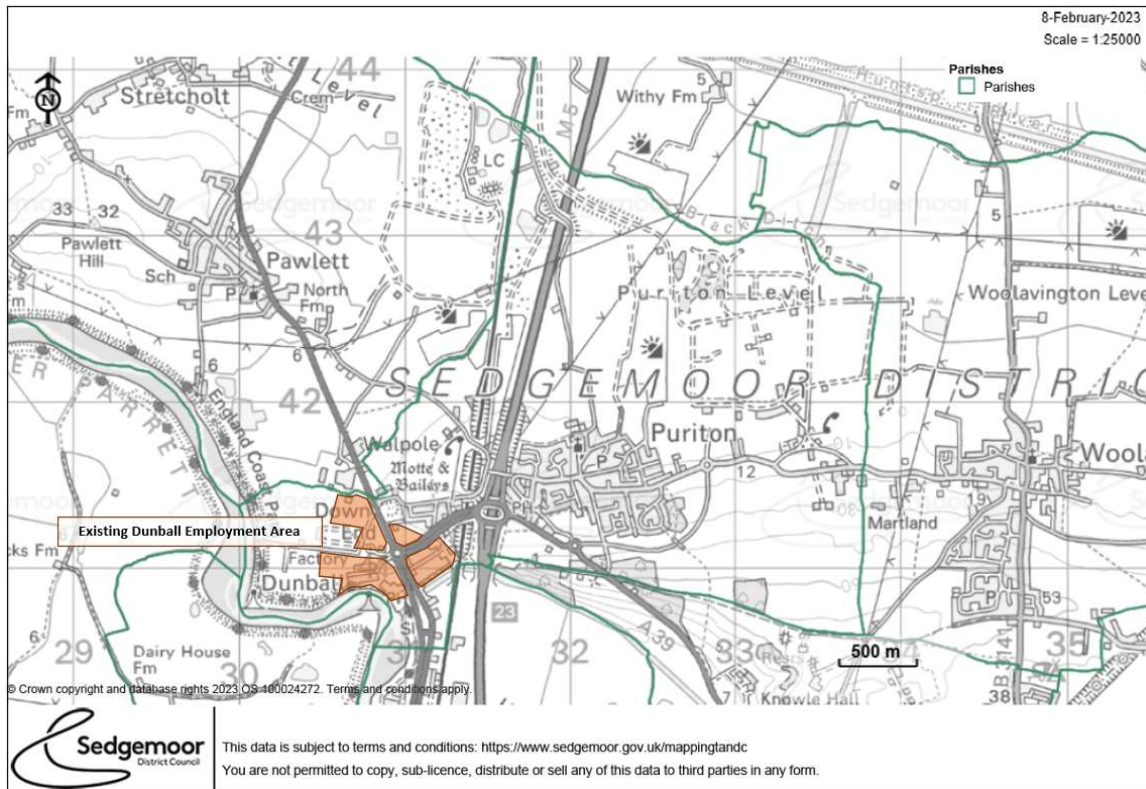
We have cited, earlier in this section, the local community support for local businesses and limited small-scale employment in the Parish. However, support was not unanimous, and we need to be balanced in terms of what we propose for employment. Therefore, while we have not allocated or proposed specific employment development or land in the Plan, our policy seeks to support proposals which are put forward through planning applications which enable existing businesses to remain in the Parish and which create new opportunities for local people to work close to where they live to reduce travel and also help sustain our local economy by retaining work and spend within the Parish where possible. However, we are clear that these types of proposal cannot be at any cost to the other principles established in this Plan nor at the cost of the things that we value. Our policy E4 also seeks to ensure that a balance is provided between the injection to the wider district economy to be provided at the Gravity site, dealt with through Local Plan policies and what the needs of the existing local economy are within the village and at the Dunball estate.

Prior to the Gravity site being developed, the existing industrial estate and wharf at Dunball, south of Down End provides the focus on employment space in the parish, also playing a wider strategic role in employment premises for the Bridgwater area and given its location adjacent to (west of) Junction 23 of the M5. Part of the site (at the north-eastern end) is within an identified Area of Archaeological Potential, designated by Local Plan policy D26: Historic Environment. The Dunball site is identified on Map 12.

While it is accepted that we cannot control all changes of use on the site (given permitted development rights in place), we wish to protect the main uses of the industrial estate for employment to support both the local and wider economy. This is particularly important with changes to the economy being experienced during and post coronavirus pandemic and also given the potential impact that new premises on the Gravity site could have on existing uses at Dunball. While uses between the Dunball and Gravity sites are most likely to be complementary rather than competing, it is important that we set out a policy framework which seeks to support both to help ensure balance across uses in the parish and the role the sites play across a wider and strategic area outside our boundaries. Policy E5 offers such protection and

supports development and change of use on the site subject to criteria which align with the priorities of this Plan set out elsewhere.

Map 12: Existing Employment Areas



© crown copyright 2023 OS 100051603

POLICY E4: SMALL SCALE EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES TO SUPPORT THE LOCAL ECONOMY

1. Development proposals for the creation of workshops and other business premises to support small and medium sized local businesses and which provide opportunities for local employment will be supported within or well-related to the settlement boundary where they have no adverse impact on the following (or such impacts can be satisfactorily mitigated):

- i) the character of the built environment;**
- ii) listed buildings, local heritage assets and their setting, and the Area of Archaeological Potential identified by Local Plan policy D26;**

- iii) the character and setting of the natural environment;
- iv) residential amenity;
- v) traffic generation;
- vi) noise; and,
- vii) light pollution.

2. Where proposals are within the defined settlement boundary, they will need to demonstrate that they will not exacerbate existing parking capacity issues and provide sufficient off-street parking for the anticipated number of employees and visitors using the units in line with the most up-to-date Local Highway Authority standards.

POLICY E5: PROTECTING AND ENHANCING EXISTING EMPLOYMENT AREAS

1. Existing employment areas (defined on Map 12) will be safeguarded for employment uses (outside of permitted development changes of use) to retain and promote a diverse mix of businesses as part of the local economy.

2. Development proposals to improve or extend existing employment areas and premises within them will be supported where:

- i) the proposal demonstrates flexibility / adaptability in use of the space; and,
- ii) there would be no adverse impact on the following (or such impact can be satisfactorily mitigated):
 - a) the character of the built environment;
 - b) the Area of Archaeological Potential identified by Local Plan policy D26;
 - c) the character of the natural environment, landscape and setting;
 - d) residential amenity and / or the amenity of other existing neighbouring uses;
 - e) flood risk;
 - f) traffic conditions;
 - g) noise; and,
 - h) light pollution.

9.5 Live-work Units

9.5.1 Policy Justification

The NPPF (paragraph 84a) says that planning policies should “support the sustainable growth and expansion of all types of business in rural areas, both through conversion of existing buildings and well-designed new buildings”. As we have set out above, we have identified a need for support for small scale employment uses to supported and sustain small and micro businesses within the existing village. Our business “offer” within the parish needs to support this organic local economy while complementing the more strategic provision to be delivered at the Gravity site and the industrial units at Dunball.

We have also identified, elsewhere in this Plan, that there is a desire to support housing which provides people from the local community to remain in the community. Alongside this, an aim to reduce travel by private car and a recognition that more and more people are now working from home or would like to, suggests that policy intervention could help to bring these three factors together and help deliver locally based solutions.

On this basis we have set out a policy (B1) which supports the principle of live-work units. These are not the same as someone simply working from home from a study, spare bedroom or home office, where planning permission is not normally required when the use is not considered to override the primary use of the property as a dwelling. These types of units can have the beneficial effect of facilitating flexible working practices in the interests of building a stronger local economy, but at a small scale. They typically comprise one floor for use as a workshop and one floor as a one or two-bedroom dwelling, often a flat. They will be suitable where there is no adverse effect on the day to day living environment and where the business uses do not impose an unacceptable loss of existing supply of employment space.

Policy E6 is designed to facilitate the appropriate development of live-work space within the context of proposals that require planning permission³⁸. They will often come about from the conversion of an employment unit or space. We consider that for conversion of existing employment space to form a live-work unit not to be to the detriment of the local economy, proposals should seek to minimise any negative impact on it. This is difficult to demonstrate as space is not necessarily an indicator of how an employment use either benefits or impacts

³⁸ It is recognised that some proposals will be subject to permitted development rights and while they may require “prior approval” from the local planning authority, may not need to apply for full planning permission.

negatively on the economy, while jobs, profit of a company or turnover (which are not necessarily considered as material to a planning application) might.

We would suggest, however, that a business owner should be able to live comfortably in the live-work unit and that, depending on the size of the unit in question may equate to 30% – 40% of the internal floorspace area. Another indicator that an applicant might use would be the degree of change in employment space that will be introduced by the proposal and how a proposed business type might outweigh the loss of space in a rural area which needs to retain a core of its employment uses to help maintain the rural sustainability of our village.

Our policy also looks to safeguard the use of live-work units and not for the development of such units to be an alternative route to an aim of obtaining permission for a dwelling without employment use attached.

POLICY E6: LIVE-WORK UNITS

1. Proposals for development to enable or facilitate working or living in the same building or site will be supported where located outside but well-related to the Puriton settlement boundary and built extent of Downend and should demonstrate that:

- i) the proposed units would be well-related to the uses of the surrounding land and buildings;**
- ii) the proposed uses would not cause unacceptable nuisance to and would be compatible with neighbouring premises / properties;**
- iii) the proposed development would provide satisfactory living conditions for future occupants; and,**
- iv) there would be no adverse impact on the following (or such impacts can be satisfactorily mitigated):**
 - a) the character of the built environment;**
 - b) the character of the natural environment and setting;**
 - c) residential amenity;**
 - d) traffic conditions;**
 - e) noise; and,**

f) light pollution.

2. Proposals which seek the change of use of existing employment space to form a live-work unit must demonstrate that the occupancy of the living space is restricted to a person directly involved with the business being operated.

3. Proposals to change a live-work unit to wholly residential use must demonstrate:

- i) that the unit has been actively marketed for live-work for two years;**
- ii) that no demand exists for its continued use for live-work; and,**
- iii) the proposed change of use would be well-related to the uses of surrounding land and buildings.**

4. Proposals for live-work units in the open countryside will only be supported where the development would re-use redundant or disused buildings and enhance its immediate setting and there would be no adverse impact on the following (or such impacts can be satisfactorily mitigated):

- a) the character of the natural environment and setting;**
- b) residential amenity;**
- c) traffic conditions;**
- d) noise; and,**
- e) light pollution.**

10 Built and Natural Environment

Objectives

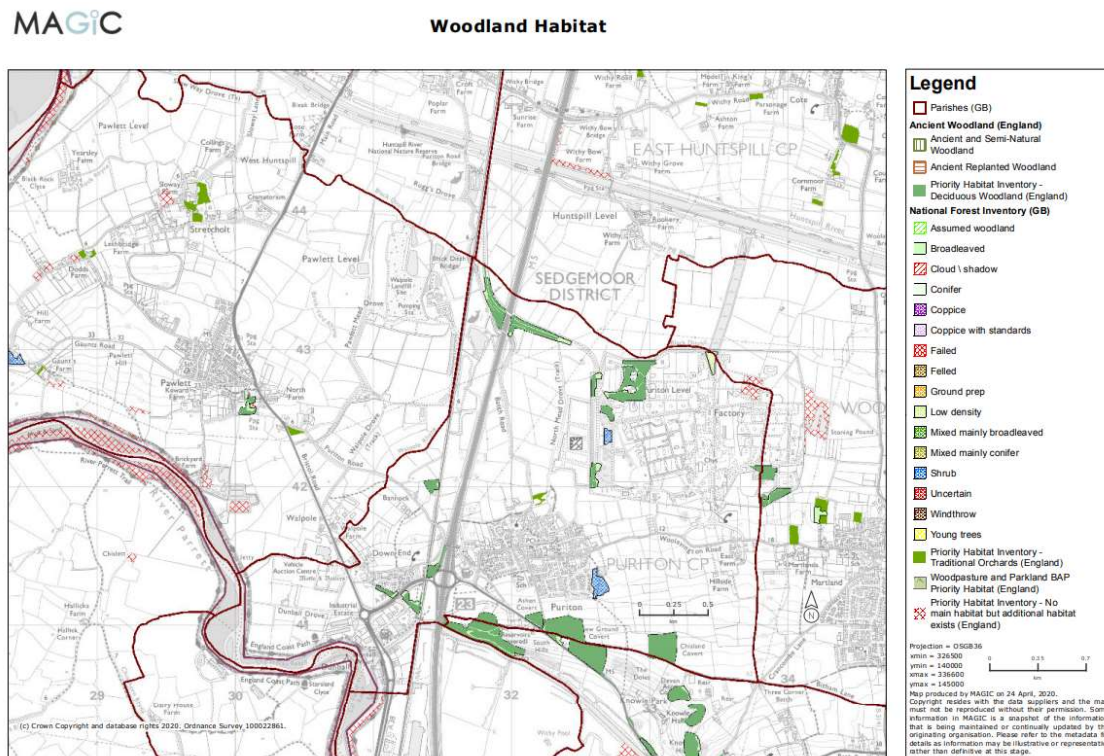
“To maintain the high quality of the natural and built environments of Puriton Parish, and to protect its well-preserved heritage.”

10.1 Introduction

10.1.1 Natural Environment

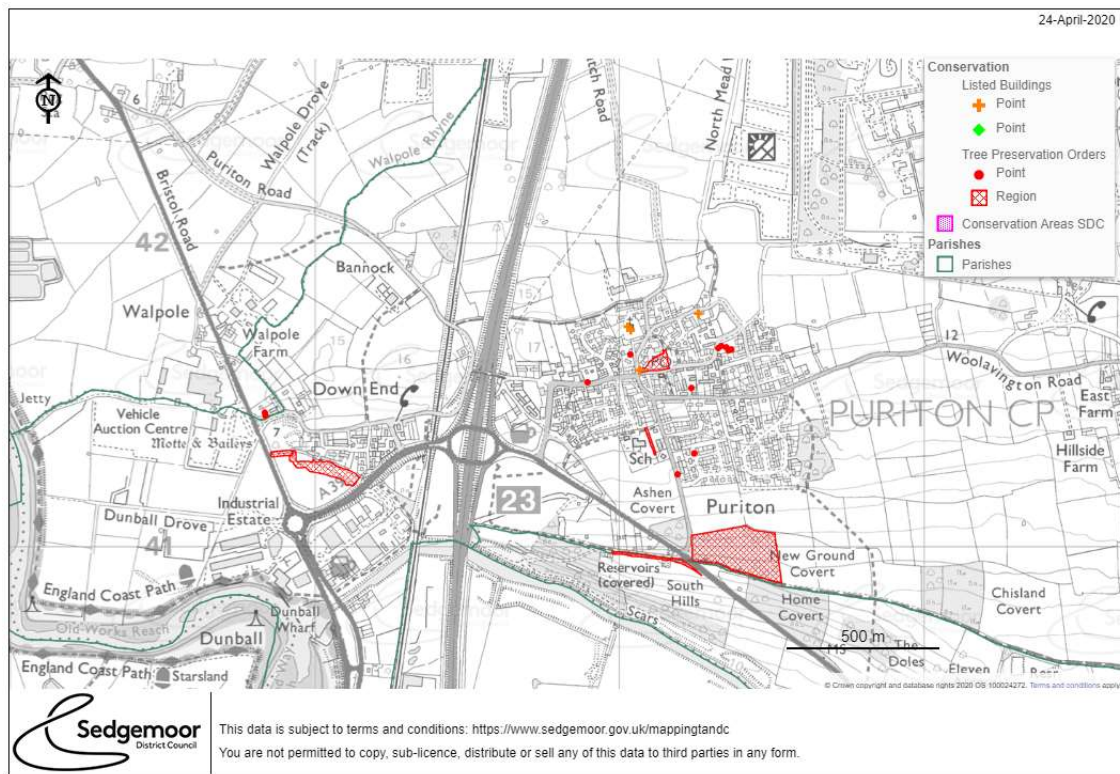
As we have set out elsewhere in the Plan, Puriton Parish is relatively small, dominated in character by Puriton village, the Gravity (ROF) regeneration site, and with Downend, HPC park and ride, the River Parrett and the Dunball industrial estate dissected by the M5 motorway. However, the Parish has notable areas of green and blue infrastructure, with much of the parish being flat and within the River Parrett extensive floodplain. The parish has several areas of woodland and other notable areas of green habitat as defined on the map below.

Map 13: Woodland Habitat Areas



At a more localised level, we are also fortunate to have many trees under protection of Tree Preservation orders (TPOs), although some of these are for whole groups of trees.

Map 14: Tree Preservation Orders

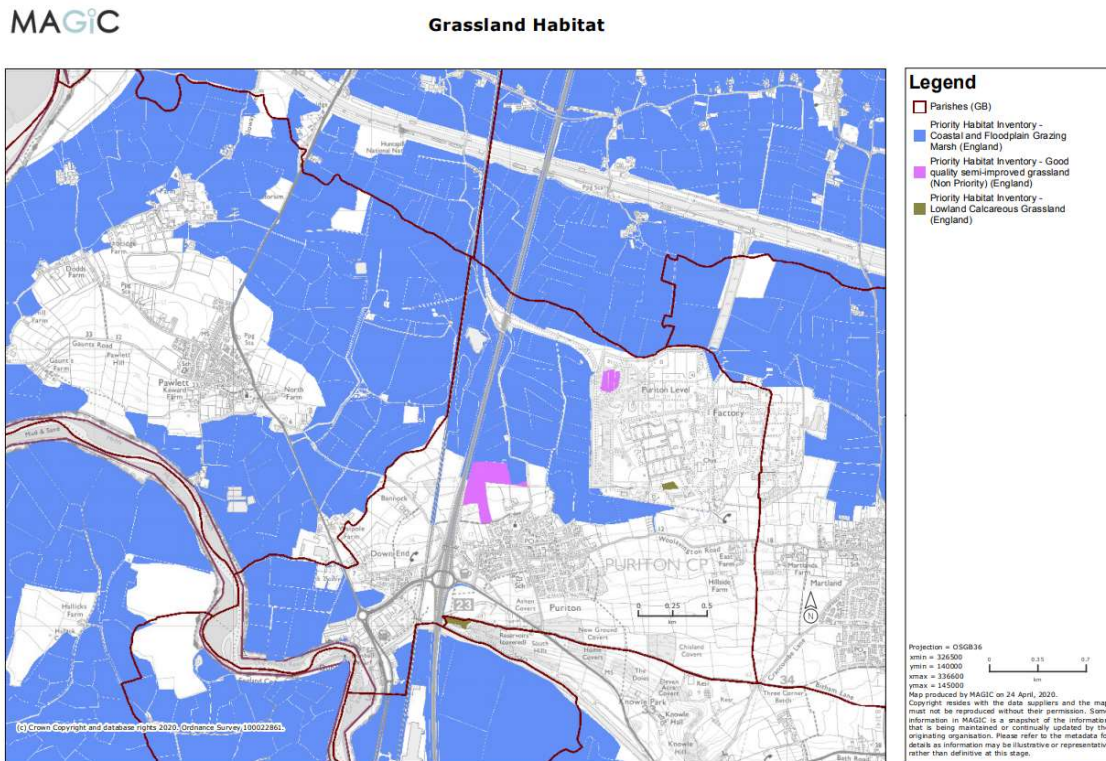


© crown copyright 2023 OS 100051603

Source: <https://www.sedgemoor.gov.uk/article/947/Interactive-Mapping-Online>

The floodplain of the River Parrett establishes a significant area of floodplain grazing marshland with pockets of good quality semi-improved grassland in the north-western quadrant of the Parish.

Map 15: Grassland Habitat



© crown copyright 2023 OS 100051603

Source: <https://magic.defra.gov.uk/>

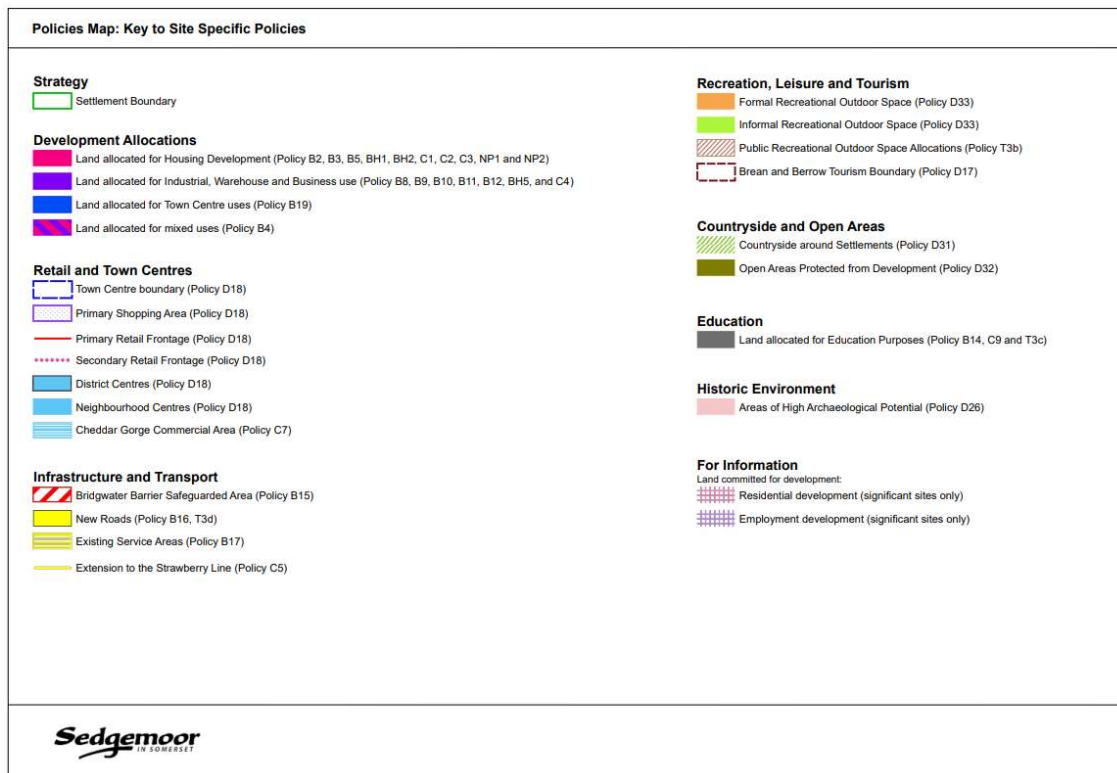
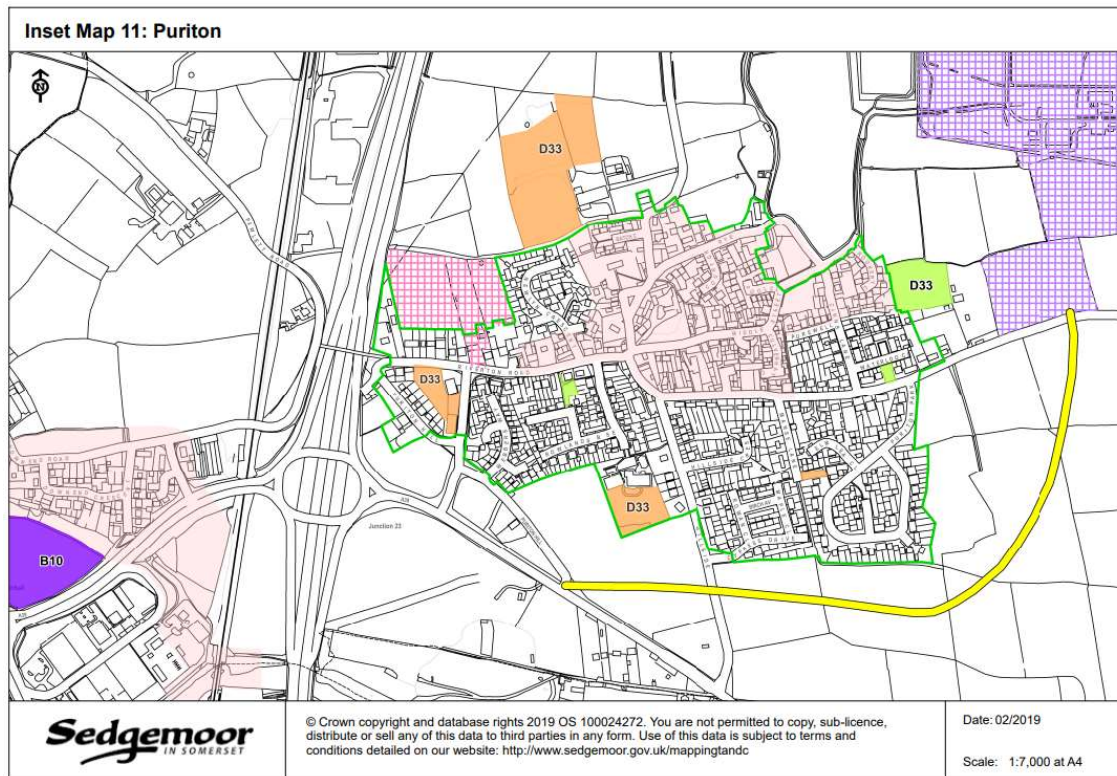
Outside of these notable areas of habitat, there are no known areas designated for protection such as Sites of Special Scientific Interest or Special Areas of Conservation.

The Puriton Design Code³⁹ captures a character assessment of the parish pulling together many of these identified assets and the wider landscape character, with a focus on Puriton village.

We are fortunate to have several formal (4) and informal (3) recreation spaces protected through Local Plan policy D33: Protection of Existing Public Recreational Outdoor Space. These are managed spaces and so fall part way between what are considered “natural” and “built” environments.

³⁹ See sections 3.2 and 3.3 of the Design Code, see <https://puritonparishcouncil.org/neighbourhood-plan/>

Map 16: Local Plan Policy Designations

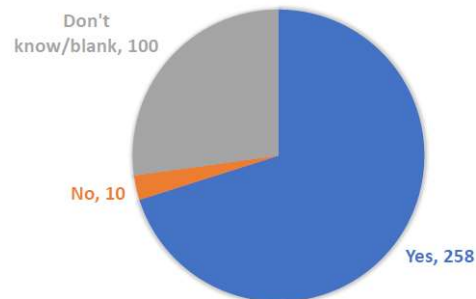


Source: <https://www.sedgemoor.gov.uk/LocalPlan>

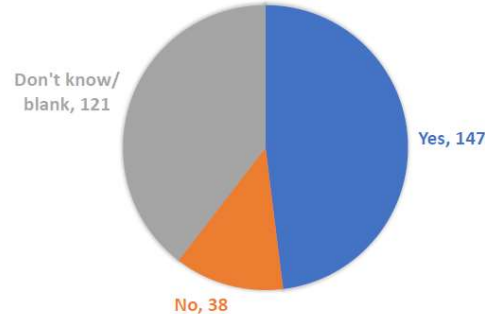
During consultation, the local community has told us, amongst other things, that:

- Overwhelmingly, there was support for greenspaces to be protected;
- There was also a good level of support for trees and hedges to be protected;
- That there are a wide selection of green spaces that should be protected, for a variety of reasons including leisure / recreation, habitats for wildlife, landscape and views;
- That areas requiring protection include: the village green, village hall field, sports centre field, Puriton woods, Downend and

Q25: Any green spaces to be protected?



Q27: Protection for specific trees/hedges?



Motte & Bailey Fields, the fields opposite Puriton park, the orchard at Middle Street, Batch Road / Black Ditch, 14 acres, Horse Fields, Elmlea Children's Park, the Rookery, the entrance to the village, Rye Grass Keep and Northmead Drive, Cypress Drive entrance, Manor, Batch Road and all footpaths and bridleways. Of these, the most used by respondents was Puriton woods, followed by the village hall field, sports centre woods and field, Rye Grass Keep and Northmead Drive and public footpaths. All others received a good level of support, with minimal respondents using the village entrance and Cypress Drive entrance.

From our written evidence base, the key messages can be summarised as follows:

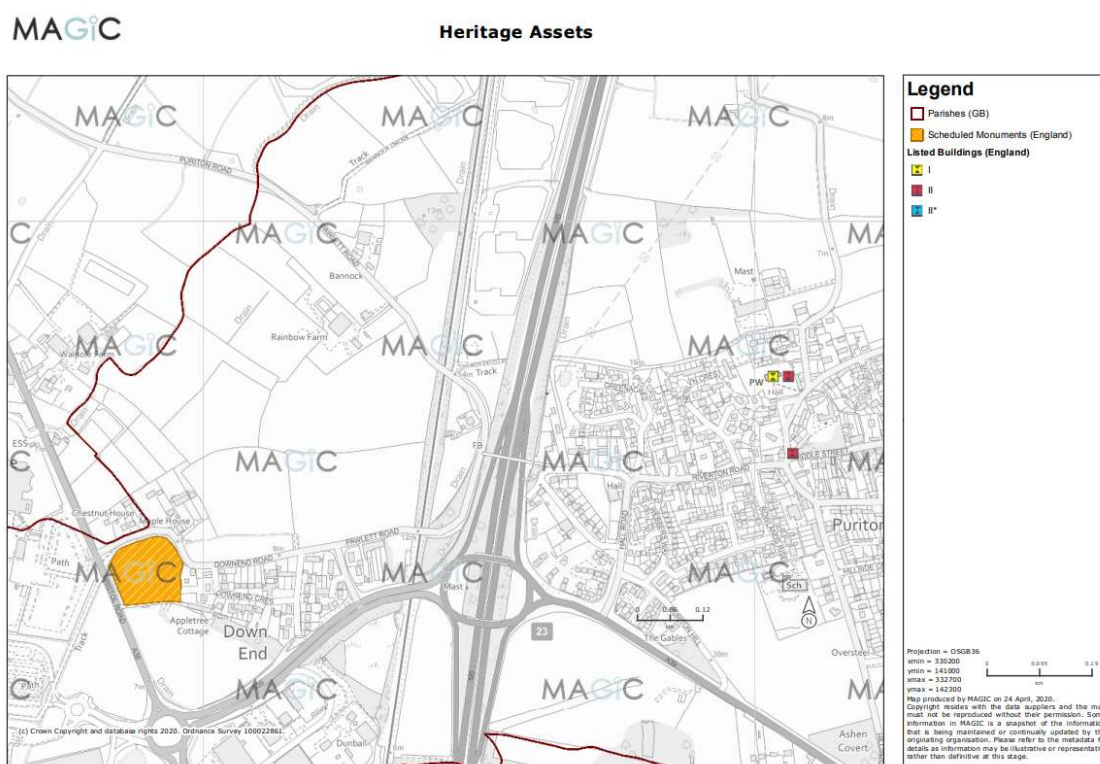
- We have an opportunity to designate local green space (LGS) areas through criteria set by national planning policy;
- We have several areas of and individual trees receiving protection already through Tree Preservation Orders (TPOs);
- We have a number of woodland and grassland habitat areas which are listed as important by Natural England and which we could protect as locally valuable environment assets;

- We could take the opportunity to better link our network of woodland and grassland habitat areas and TPOs by identifying hedgerows which act as green corridors and could be protected through policy. Linkages with our recreation areas currently protected through Local Plan policy D33 could also be established as part of the network, as could any additional local green spaces (LGS) we designate in this Plan. The network should extend to the River Parrett corridor and incorporate the proposals for additional green infrastructure included as part of the Gravity development.

10.1.2 Built Environment

The Parish has few registered heritage assets, with the scheduled monument at Downend being the most prominent and a handful of listed buildings within Puriton village (see Map 17 below).

Map 17: Heritage Assets



© crown copyright 2023 OS 100051603

Source: <https://magic.defra.gov.uk/>

There are no Conservation Areas. However, as noted in the Local Plan's policies inset map there is an extensive Area of High Archaeological Potential identified across much of the northern part of Puriton village and one in Downend.

The Puriton Design Code⁴⁰ summarises eight main areas of built character in Puriton village as follows:

- Historic Core, around St. Michael's Church, Rye and Middle Street.
- Woolavington Road, between Middle Street & Woolavington Road.
- Hillside, off Hillside and Woolavington Road.
- Puriton Park, including the properties built in 1970s around an inner ring street.
- Rowlands Rise, including the developments off Rowlands Rise developed in 1960s.
- Newlyn Crescent, north of Riverton Road.
- Puriton Gate (PG) & Riverton Gardens (RG), including the new developments to the east of the parish.
- The Village Green, off the Village Hall and the Puriton Inn.
- Site South of Woolavington Road.

These are shown on the map over the page, taken from the Design Code.



Downend

⁴⁰ See <https://puritonparishcouncil.org/neighbourhood-plan/>

Map 18: Character Areas and Heritage Assets in Puriton Village



Figure 4: Map showing character areas, heritage assets and existing facilities

KEY		Facilities	
Gravity Enterprise Park	Character Areas	Allotment	Puriton Sports Centre
Listed buildings	Historic Core	Butcher	Puriton Village Hall
Grade I	Woolavington Road	Day Nursery	The Puriton Inn
Grade II	Hillside	Hairdressers	Drain
	Puriton Park	Post Office	Railway
	Rowlands Rise	Puriton Primary School	Public Right of Way
	Newlyn Crescent		AECOM
	Puriton Gate (PG) & Riverton Gardens (RG)		
	Village Green		
	Site South of Woolavington Road		

Source: Puriton Design Code, p.30, AECOM, see <https://puritonparishcouncil.org/neighbourhood-plan/>.

The houses around the Village Green, Rye and the area in the vicinity of St Michael and All Angels Church is, in architectural terms, the highlight of the Village together with Puriton Manor. Buildings vary in their height, size, form and architectural styles to create a distinctive character. Local stone was used extensively throughout this area of village for buildings and stone boundary walls that contribute to the sense of enclosure.

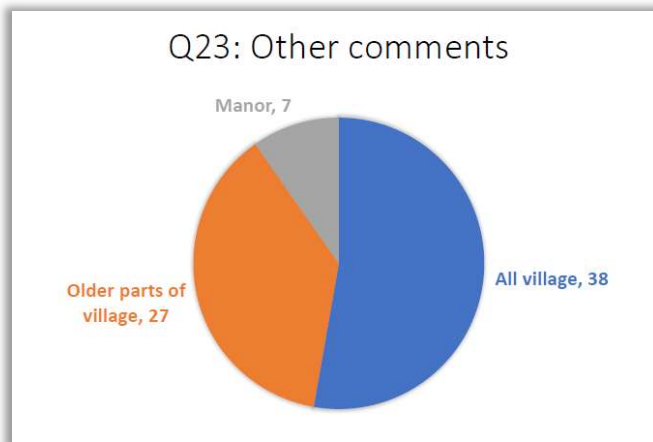
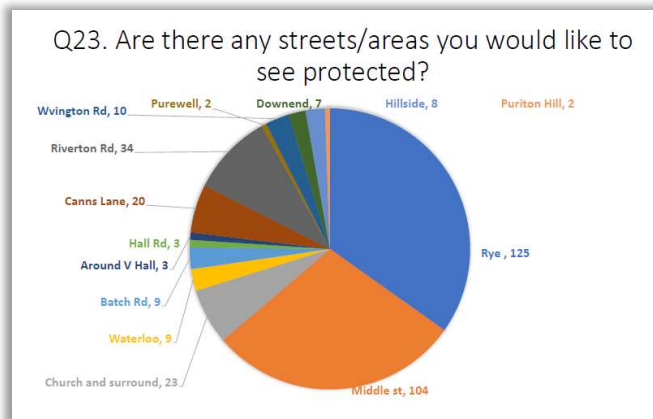
During consultation, the local community has told us, amongst other things, that:

- There is support for conservation areas with 67% of respondents indicating support.
- Outside of that, a number of individual streets and areas were identified as being important in the built environment and that should be protected, the most popular choices by far being Rye and Middle Street. Others receiving a good level of support included Riverton

Road, the church and surround and Canns Lane. Other comments suggested support for protection of the older parts of the village and with some suggesting all of the village should receive protection.

From our written evidence base, the key messages can be summarised as follows:

- The Parish has few heritage assets although those which exist and their setting should be protected.
- Within the context of open landscape areas surrounding built-up areas and the M5 and rail corridor which bisect the parish north to south, there are eight distinct built character areas within Puriton village supplemented by two to the west of the M5 at Dunball and Downend.
- The Neighbourhood Plan can play its part in moving the community towards zero carbon emissions by encouraging all new non-residential buildings including any new proposals from the Gravity site, to achieve greater energy efficiency through building design, improved energy conservation and the use of renewable energy sources. It cannot, however, impose standards higher than those set by Building Regulations or in other national regulations.



10.2 Built and Natural Environment Policies Summary

Responding to the consultation responses from the community and our evidence base, our policies below focus on areas where it is considered additional policies are required and add value (and do not simply repeat) the policies of the Local Plan. They therefore focus on:

1. high quality and sustainable design (in relation to the built environment);

2. flood risk (principally in relation to the impact on the built environment);
3. the protection of valued landscape areas (in relation to the natural environment);
4. the protection of areas of land valued for their biodiversity and habitat (in relation to the natural environment); and,
5. areas of land which require protection as local green spaces which have local recreational or cultural value (in relation to the managed natural and built environments).

10.3 High Quality and Sustainable Design

10.3.1 Policy Justification

With housing development taking place in the parish (mainly in Puriton village) and with the regeneration site at the ROF / Gravity site, the “look and feel” of development is at the forefront of our policy on built environment. While our consultation response suggested support for a conservation area, there seem few if any whole parts of the village which would qualify for such designation, a point which the character assessment reinforces. However, looking forward, we must ensure that there is some local control over what new development looks like, how it fits with the rest of Puriton village, how it positively contributes to enabling people to have more active lives and how it contributes at the small scale to the aim of sustainable development and reduces our local impact on the changing climate.

During consultation, residents considered that the Neighbourhood Plan should influence the design of new buildings by encouraging the use of traditional materials such as Blue Lias stone and Bridgwater red roof tiles and local architectural characteristics. One of the comments in the questionnaire was “no more lego boxes which ruin the look of the village.” It was clear that residents have pride in where they live. We need to maintain that sense of pride and enhance it where possible.

Responding to concerns, our Character Assessment, undertaken by consultants has been used to produce a design code for Puriton which highlights the key aspects of character and design that new development should adhere to moving forward.

Our Policy BNE1 sets out the main criteria that proposers of development should take fully into account as they consider development schemes. The Code applies to all forms of development and not simply new housing. Ease of access, sustainability, the use of renewable energy sources

and energy conservation should be encouraged, although we recognise that the scope for the Plan to require higher energy efficiency and generation targets than set nationally through the Building Regulations is limited. It signposts the Puriton Design Code as the main point of reference relating to the detail of development and what we consider to be high quality in the Puriton context. Proposals should take fully into account relevant design guidance, and particularly Active Design⁴¹, Secured by Design⁴² and the National Design Guide⁴³. We also encourage developers to discuss their proposals with the local community at the earliest stage to ensure that developments meet the aims and objectives of this Plan, the Design Code and views of the community.

BNE1: HIGH-QUALITY AND SUSTAINABLE DESIGN

- 1. All new development should be of high-quality design, complementing the local vernacular, enhancing visual amenity and minimising any adverse impacts on the built environment and neighbouring amenity. It should aim to meet a high level of sustainable design and construction and be optimised for energy efficiency, targeting net zero carbon emissions.**
- 2. For proposals to be considered high quality in the Puriton parish context, they should meet the requirements of the Puriton Design Code and take fully into account the following considerations, where feasible, viable and applicable:**
 - i) be well-related to scale, form and character of existing village built-up area and of its setting;**
 - ii) respect and have no adverse impact on historic buildings, character, and heritage assets and their setting and take into account the potential impact on the Areas of Archaeological Potential defined by Local Plan policy D26: Historic Environment;**
 - iii) be no adverse impact on the amenity of neighbouring uses (factors such as noise, tranquillity, light pollution, enjoyment of space and so on);**

⁴¹ See <https://www.sportengland.org/guidance-and-support/facilities-and-planning/design-and-cost-guidance/active-design>

⁴² See <https://www.securedbydesign.com/>

⁴³ See <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/national-design-guide>

- iv) ensure good and safe accessibility for refuse, emergency and delivery vehicles, where feasible, taking into account likely levels of on-street parking by residents and / or employees;
- v) provide safe and easy access for pedestrians and cyclists onto the existing pedestrian and cycle network and, where feasible provide segregated, safe routes to enable good connectivity to local facilities and amenities;
- vi) have boundary treatment well-related to those of nearby dwellings and other buildings to complement the character of its setting;
- vii) enhance landscape character and setting, contribution to cleaner air and biodiversity and ecology through appropriate planting;
- viii) exceed requirements set out in Building Regulations standards in relation to energy efficiency of materials where viable and feasible;
- ix) exceed standards relating to Building for a Healthy Life for dwellings and BREEAM “Very Good” for commercial / employment uses, or other up-to-date standards at the time of application, where viable and feasible;
- x) have a layout which optimises passive solar gain;
- xi) respond positively to the National Design Guide;
- xii) respond positively to “Secured by Design” guidance;
- xiii) respond positively to principles such as those for “walkable communities” in Sport England and Public Health England’s “Active Design” guidance where viable and feasible;
- xiv) incorporate on-site energy generation from renewable sources such as solar panels or heat pumps where viable and feasible;
- xv) provide one electric charging point for electric plug-in and plug-in hybrid vehicles for each dedicated parking space and garage;
- xvi) incorporate suitable Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDS) to provide wider benefits to biodiversity and amenity value, as well as enhanced management of surface water runoff; and,
- xvii) for proposals for dwellings, provide private rear amenity space (gardens) appropriate to dwelling type and size and to inform consideration of the appropriateness

of a proposal's suitability in relation to the character of the built environment and the site's setting, applicants should provide an analysis of proposal's plot size(s) and building footprint in relation to garden areas of the dwellings in the surrounding area.

3. Where development proposals do not meet the design requirements above and those set out in the Puriton Design Code, applicants are required to demonstrate why the proposal cannot meet requirements due to feasibility, viability and applicability.

4. Proposers of development are encouraged to engage with the local community and Parish Council at the earliest opportunity to help ensure that any proposals take into account both this plan's aims and objectives and the views of the local community.

10.4 Flood Risk

10.4.1 Policy Justification

A large swathe of the Parish is identified as an area of flood risk (and in flood zone 3, the highest risk zone) although benefitting from flood protection, mitigating the risk. Much of this area is outside the main village but extends into parts of Puriton and Downend. Maps below also show the known extent of surface water flooding. While shown on two maps, the risk from flooding, both fluvial and surface water, are linked by the cause of many flood events, namely heavy rainfall in short periods or over extended periods of time. We believe that there is sufficient policy coverage at the district and national levels as set out in Local Plan policies S4: Sustainable Development Principles, S5: Mitigating the Causes and Adapting to the Effects of Climate Change and D1: Flood Risk and Surface Water Management, and by section 14 in the NPPF to ensure that the risk to and arising from new development is minimised and mitigated where necessary. As a first point of principle, proposals should seek to avoid inappropriate development in areas of flood risk and development is encouraged to take place only in areas with the lowest risk of flooding, through applying the sequential test. Where avoidance is not possible, development must be designed to be appropriately safe and resilient throughout its lifetime, without increasing flood risk elsewhere. Avoidance is the most effective way of preventing flood damages and reduces a future need for costly and often carbon-intensive flood defences and pumped drainage systems. This should take into account all forms of flood risk.

We are clear that our neighbourhood plan cannot, on its own, prevent flood risk and it will be a combination of actions, many outside of that which can be affected through the planning system, which can be carried out to help reduce and manage the risk.

While the maintenance and management of flood protection measures is not something for which we can introduce planning policy, we would stress the critical importance of effective maintenance and management of these measures and of land owners' responsibilities to ensure the effectiveness of drainage ditches, gullies and drains and maintenance and improvement of planting to help mitigate the flow rate of run-off during periods of heavy and prolonged rainfall to help ensure continued protection of the village from flooding events.

However, there is the opportunity in our Plan to introduce a policy to reinforce the need for measures to be considered through development proposals which play a critical role in the prevention of and mitigation of flooding. Our policy BNE2 seeks to ensure that new development does not exacerbate surface water flooding events as a result of new development increasing run-off. The policy applies to all scales of development, as even small scale development can have an impact on flood risk. The policy also requires a management plan to be put in place for sustainable drainage systems (SuDs) which are put in place when new development is built, to ensure that such systems, designed to prevent flooding issues, maintain their efficiency and that responsibility is put in place to ensure that they remain effective.

Map 19: Flood Risk Areas



© crown copyright 2023 OS 100051603

Source: <https://flood-map-for-planning.service.gov.uk/>

Map 20: Areas of Known Surface Water Flooding (Puriton Village Focus)



Extent of flooding from surface water

High Medium Low Very low Location you selected

© crown copyright 2023 OS 100051603

Source: <https://flood-map-for-planning.service.gov.uk/>

POLICY BNE2: FLOOD RISK

- 1. Development proposals should demonstrate that they do not increase local flood risk nor compromise the effectiveness of flood alleviation or risk reduction measures. Where appropriate this could be through the use of sustainable drainage systems (SuDS) and / or other management schemes, with particular reference to fluvial / river flooding and locations of known sewer flooding and surface water flooding identified on up-to-date flood risk maps. Wherever feasible and appropriate, natural flood management approaches, such as river restoration, protection of existing natural assets and the use of blue/green infrastructure should be utilised, and all proposals should consider using permeable surfacing, reducing run-off and making space for water.**
- 2. Development and surface water drainage must be carefully located and designed to avoid pollution risks to waters and address potential environmental impact associated with low flows. To address any quantitative issues with the waterbodies, SuDS should be designed so to maximise recharge to the aquifer and can support water levels in receiving rivers.**
- 3. Where sustainable drainage systems are introduced, a management plan should be put in place for future maintenance of the system.**
- 4. Opportunities should be taken for proposals to make a positive contribution to managing flood risk and enhancing local flood risk management strategies.**

10.5 Locally Valued Landscapes

10.5.1 Policies Justification

Our Design Code (and summary character assessment)⁴⁴ has identified broad areas of landscape which are particularly important with regard to the essential setting of Puriton village with a focus of the setting on the eastern side of the village. This is supplemented by our visual reflection and assessment of views⁴⁵ which are of particular importance locally either because of the landscape they frame or the contribution they make to enhancing parts of our built

⁴⁴ This can be seen as the context for our Design Code here <https://puritonparishcouncil.org/neighbourhood-plan/>

⁴⁵ See Assessment of Locally Valued Views, see <https://puritonparishcouncil.org/neighbourhood-plan/>

environment and its character. Our assessment takes the subjective visual aspect of landscape quality (views and vistas) and seeks to qualify and justify an (often overlooked) key component of what makes a place unique, makes it a high-quality environment for residents and contributes to our recognition of what gives our Parish its own identity. Important vistas and views into and from the surrounding open countryside are valuable local assets that should be protected from inappropriate development to maintain the special character and landscape setting of the village. These vistas and views should remain uninterrupted and not obstructed in whole or in part. They should be protected, not only for their own sake and the sake of the amenity they offer, but also because the loss of such features and views would erode the quality of our environment and what makes Puriton, Puriton. The special views include the panoramic views of the surrounding countryside from the woods at the top of the hill in Puriton towards the Mendips and the Quantock Hills and the Levels and Moors, which are important to its setting.

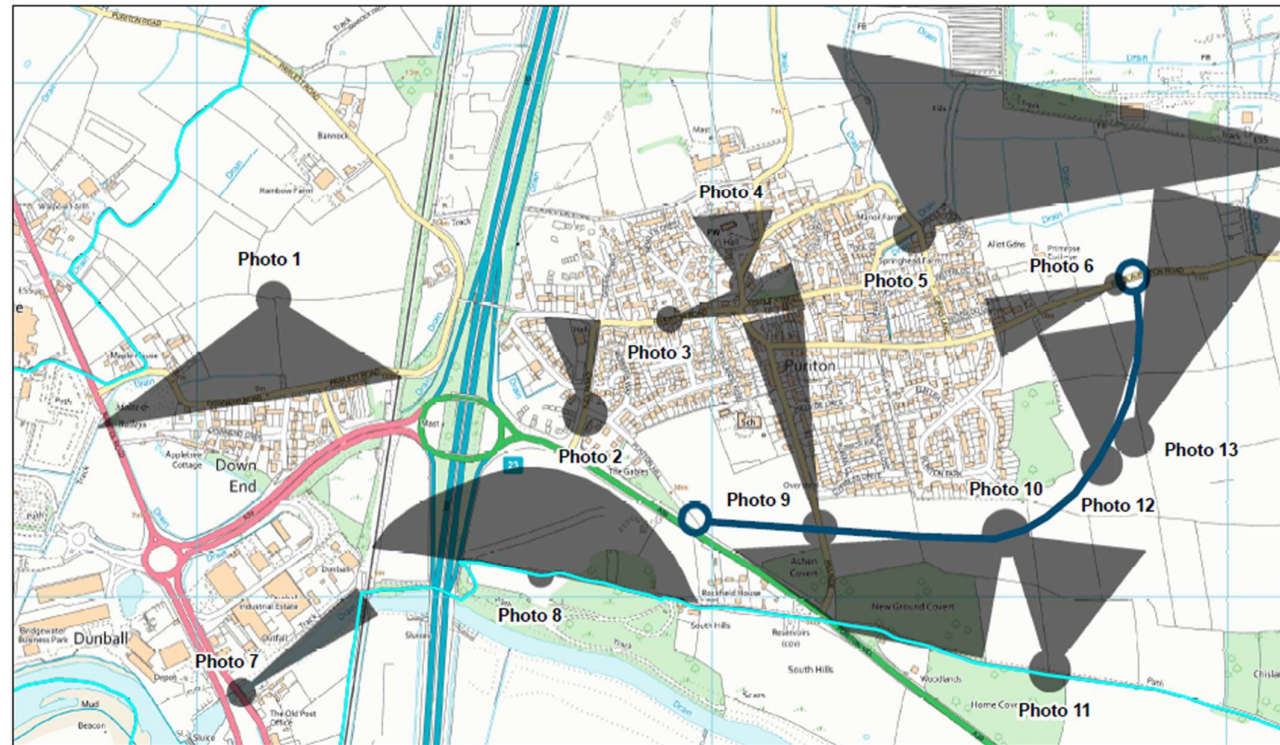
At the heart of what makes a good view is landscape character and a feeling of openness or open countryside. The adopted Local Plan policy D31: Countryside around settlements provides the strategic policy context to protect the countryside as part of the landscape. We recognise that the quality of views recognised as important locally is subjective (and not tangible in a land-use sense) and one view considered important by one person may not be by another. In line with national policy and land-use, our policy BNE3 therefore focuses on the elements of landscape and openness which help form the views which are important to us locally. The policy sets out the areas and views which we wish to see protected and criteria against which development proposals will be considered. Importantly, proposers of development should take fully into account our Character Assessment, our Local Views / Visual Landscape Study, the Puriton Design Code and our Local Green Space assessment when considering the appropriateness of development proposals.

Our policy adds a local, detailed layer of protection to the Local Plan policy protection against inappropriate types of development for most areas of the countryside outside of the Puriton settlement boundary. Map 21 shows the location of our locally valued views (with “view cones” which indicate the direction of the view) and areas of landscape that we particularly value.

Map 21: Our Locally Valued Views and Landscape Areas



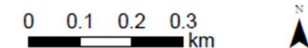
**Puriton Neighbourhood Plan
Locally Valued
Landscapes and Views**



Legend

- Gravity Link Road
- View Splays
- Parish_Boundary

Ref.	Description
Photo 1	View across open landscape to Downend
Photo 2	Entrance to Village and Village Green
Photo 3	View towards Puriton Manor trees and historic Middle Street
Photo 4	Best View of Chuch and Church Green
Photo 5	Beautiful view of the rural North-Eastern edge of the village
Photo 6	Rural village entrance from Eastern end
Photo 7	Best river view (Kings Sedgemoor Drain) within Puriton
Photo 8	Lovely view of village from rural setting on the Polden Ridge
Photo 9	Village entrance from Hillside
Photo 10	View of woods New Ground Covert and Ashen Covert from Gravity Link Road
Photo 11	View towards Mendips from (Polden Ridge)
Photo 12	View towards the coast and Brent Knoll from Gravity Link Road
Photo 13	Best view of the Somerset Levels and Mendips



POLICY BNE3: LOCALLY VALUED LANDSCAPES (AND VIEWS)

1. Development proposals consistent with other policies in this Plan will be supported where they have no significant adverse impact on locally valued landscapes and protect and enhance the natural environment of the Plan area (or such impacts can be satisfactorily mitigated).

2. Our areas of particularly locally valued landscape (and views) are identified on Map 21. These areas and their setting (buffer) should be protected for the quality of their landscape and role they play in creating the character of the village.

3. Proposals which result in the unavoidable loss of these areas (in whole or in part) will only be supported where:

- i) There are no other suitable sites for the proposed development; and,**
- ii) The proposal would not have significant adverse impacts on the site's wider landscape setting or such impacts can be satisfactorily mitigated or, where this is not possible, opportunities to offset, remedy or compensate loss will need to be considered.**

4. The following assessments will be used as reference points to help assess the impact of proposals:

- i) Puriton Design Code;**
- ii) Local Views / Visual Landscape Assessment; and,**
- iii) Local Green Space Study.**

5. In relation to the Royal Ordnance Factory / Gravity site subject to the approved Local Development Order, parts 1 to 4 (inclusive) above will only apply to development proposals and reserved matters (within the Plan area) submitted for approval on the former Royal Ordnance Factory / Gravity site which fall outside of the LDO, in terms of use or the LDO area, and which occur if the LDO expires, and proposals for any additional or alternative development of the site.

10.6 Locally Valued Areas of Biodiversity, Geodiversity & Habitat

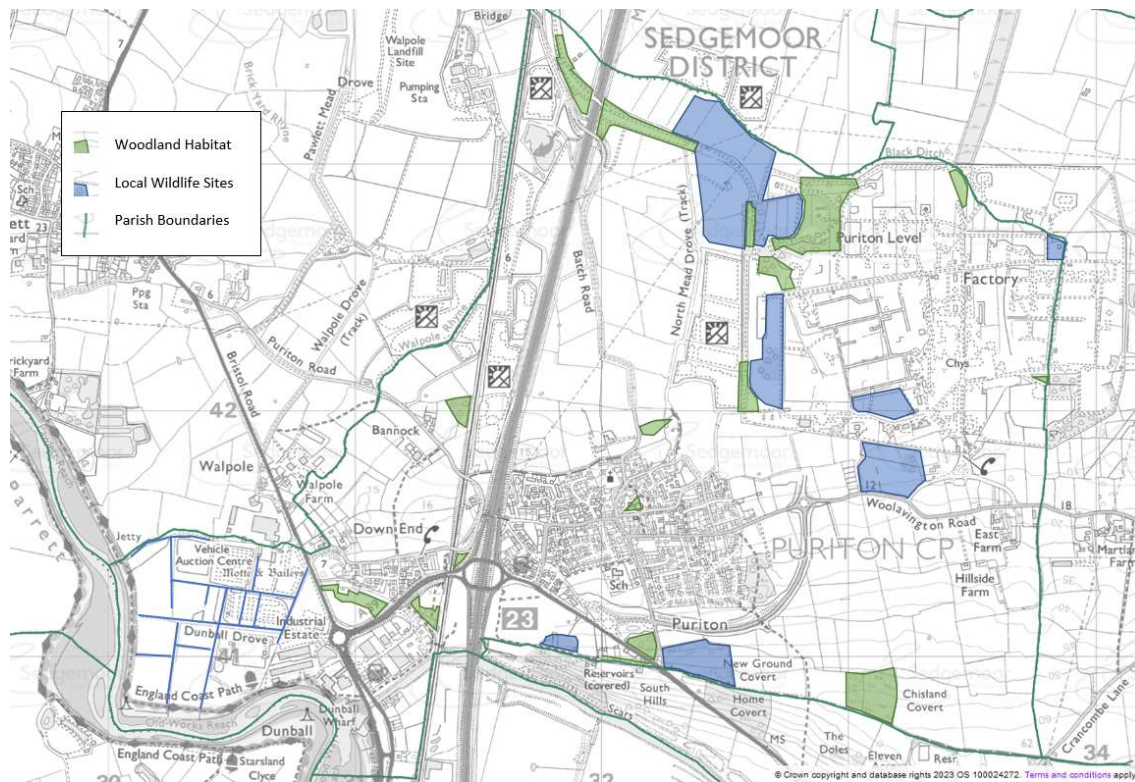
10.6.1 Policies Justification

The landscape is not the only facet of the natural environment which matters. Biodiversity, geodiversity and habitats support the wildlife and plant-life which features in the landscape, including, but not only, protected species such as badgers and bats. Responding to the community's views and their desire to see certain areas of landscape and habitat areas protected from inappropriate development, we undertook further evidence base research to identify those areas of particular value for their contribution to wildlife, biodiversity, geodiversity and habitat. In addition to our own local knowledge, this included use of the Natural England "MAGIC" land-use designation mapping resource (shown in the maps earlier in this section) to identify areas of land which could play a significant role in supporting these facets and then supplemented by records provided by the Somerset Environment Records Centre (SERC)⁴⁷ which identify habitats and species which are worthy of protection. In many cases land-use information, local opinion on landscape which forms the setting and key component of views and species identification records correlate. Our Character Assessment also supports the identification of these areas worthy of protection.

Map 22 identifies the areas of land that we wish to protect for their contribution to wildlife habitat, biodiversity and geodiversity. These areas include hedgerow and other green corridors and should be protected from loss and adverse impact must be avoided. Any proposals likely to introduce change or adverse impact on the areas designated or their setting should demonstrate that these impacts can satisfactorily be mitigated and demonstrate that there will be a net gain in biodiversity to compensate loss. Our policy BNE3 seeks to protect these areas from inappropriate development.

⁴⁷ See the evidence base on the website for details (see <https://puritonparishcouncil.org/neighbourhood-plan/>).

Map 22: Locally Valued Areas of Biodiversity, Geodiversity and Habitat



© crown copyright 2023 OS 100051603

Notes: Woodland habitat sites have been identified from Natural England's MAGIC mapping online, a Somerset Environment Records Centre (SERC) report on habitats and species locations and supported by local knowledge. Local Wildlife Sites have been identified by a Somerset Environment Records Centre (SERC) report on habitats and species locations. These sources of evidence are available to view via the neighbourhood plan pages of the website <https://puritonparishcouncil.org/neighbourhood-plan/>.

POLICY BNE4: LOCALLY VALUED AREAS OF BIODIVERSITY, GEODIVERSITY AND HABITAT

1. Our particularly locally valued areas of biodiversity, geodiversity and habitat are identified in Map 22.

2. These areas and their setting (buffer) will be protected as areas critical in supporting wildlife habitats, biodiversity and geodiversity in a manner commensurate with their statutory status and quality, and their role within the wider network of green infrastructure. Their loss will not normally be supported.

3. Proposals which result in the unavoidable loss of these areas (in whole or in part) will only be supported where:

i) There are no other suitable sites for the proposed development;

- ii) The areas (quality, land area and habitat, biodiversity and geodiversity value) can be satisfactorily replaced in close proximity to their original location with net gains in biodiversity;
- iii) A funded management and maintenance plan is agreed to ensure that net gains in biodiversity are realised; and,
- iv) The proposal would not have significant adverse impacts on the site's wider setting and connectivity (with regard to biodiversity, geodiversity and habitat) (or such impacts can be satisfactorily mitigated).

10.7 Local Green Space

10.7.1 Policies Justification

Through national planning policy, we have an opportunity to designate our important local green spaces in order to protect them and ensure that their current use remains⁴⁸. Through local consultation and gathering evidence on the nature, use of and quality of important local spaces, we have identified 12 spaces which we designate as Local Green Spaces (LGS). The areas received support for protection in our neighbourhood plan community survey. They are designated for social, leisure or environmental reasons. These spaces all meet the requirements set out in national policy which must be met for the spaces formally to receive protection as LGS (see Map 23 and Table 1) and their designation is underpinned by an assessment of their validity for designation documented in Table 1 and supported by photographs of the spaces in Appendix 3.

Other important factors to consider and which help to justify our proposed Local Green Spaces, in addition to Table 1 below, are:

⁴⁸ NPPF paragraphs 101-103 set out the criteria that are to be used to designate Local Green Space. Paragraph 101 states that "The designation of land as Local Green Space through local and neighbourhood plans allows communities to identify and protect green areas of particular importance to them. Designating land as Local Green Space should be consistent with the local planning of sustainable development and complement investment in sufficient homes, jobs and other essential services. Local Green Spaces should only be designated when a plan is prepared or updated, and be capable of enduring beyond the end of the plan period." with paragraph 102 setting the tests that need to be applied: "The Local Green Space designation should only be used where the green space is: a) in reasonably close proximity to the community it serves; b) demonstrably special to a local community and holds a particular local significance, for example because of its beauty, historic significance, recreational value (including as a playing field), tranquillity or richness of its wildlife; and c) local in character and is not an extensive tract of land."

- Local Green Spaces do not have to have public access onto or across the site nor be in public ownership to be designated.
- As far as we are aware there are no extant or unimplemented planning permissions on these areas of land at the current time.
- As part of our process of designation we have sought to contact the owners of these pieces of land.
- None of the areas proposed for designation are considered to be an “extensive tract of land”, with consideration of other made neighbourhood plans suggesting that areas of up to around 10ha should be considered as being outside of that term. All sites are considered as being local in nature and are not proposed to encompass Puriton with an extensive green buffer. Neither are any areas proposed as a measure to stop housing development – it is clear from the housing allocation made in this Plan, site assessment process, approach to development overall in this Plan and acceptance locally of several major development schemes, that the proposed Local Green Spaces are not intended to simply block housing development in or around Puriton.
- It is a misnomer that villages and hamlets in largely rural settings have abundant access to the countryside. Pockets of well-used recreational areas such as open green spaces and woodlands form an important part of local networks enabling people to stay active, walk dogs and enjoy recreation freely outside, without needing to use a private car to travel to similar areas further afield. All areas proposed for designation therefore provide a vital and sustainable area for local people with opportunities for such access constrained if the areas are lost.

This map illustrates the local green spaces and parish boundaries within the Puriton area. The map is color-coded to show these features, with green spaces highlighted in light green and parish boundaries marked with a light blue line. Key locations and green spaces are labeled with callouts:

- Local Green Spaces:**
 - Downend Fields
 - Village Hall Field
 - Horse Fields
 - Puriton Woods (New Ground Covert)
 - Former Quarry
 - Puriton Park Greenspace
 - Chisland Covert
 - Elm Lea Play Area
 - The Orchard
 - Village Green
 - Sports Centre Woods and Playing Field
 - Greenacres Play Area
- Parish Boundaries:**
 - Puriton
 - Dunball
 - Sedgemoor

The map also shows various roads, buildings, and other landmarks, providing a comprehensive overview of the area's geography and infrastructure.

Table 1: Local Green Spaces

Site	Local Significance to the Community	Close proximity to the community they serve and local in character?	Area (ha)
1 Village hall field	Used for local social events e.g. Fetes, shows etc. Areas such as this are important to the local community for physical health, social and mental wellbeing and form part of the fabric of the village's character.	Yes	0.28 ha
2 Former Quarry	Large, wooded area very popular walking and dog-walking area. Areas such as this are important to the local community for physical health, social and mental wellbeing and form part of the fabric of the village's character and setting.	Yes	1.96 ha
3 Sports Centre woods and playing field	Used for local social events and sporting activities. Areas such as this are important to the local community for physical health, social and mental wellbeing and form part of the fabric of the village's character.	Yes	3.75 ha
4 Puriton Park Greenspace	Land south of Puriton Park. Used for walking and links to Former Quarry. Areas such as this are important to the local community for physical health, social and mental wellbeing and form part of the fabric of the village's character and setting. Data from the neighbourhood plan questionnaire (2019) suggests that 5% of respondents identified this space as important. Of these, the reasoning was for exercise (70%), wildlife & nature (90%), dog walking (60%), countryside views (90%), foraging (45%) and recreation & play (40%). There is some public	Yes	1.8 ha

Site	Local Significance to the Community	Close proximity to the community they serve and local in character?	Area (ha)
	access at the eastern corner and is used by residents as a utility green space. The Character Assessment and Puriton Design Code recommends (page 25) "EN. Environment. Protect the area between Puriton Park/Cypress Drive and the new road from housing development."		
5 The Orchard	Used as a tranquil space and as a social gathering space. Community garden is well-used, for example, through provision of herbs that anyone can use. Also used as social space for groups, families, etc. Areas such as this are important to the local community for physical health, social and mental wellbeing and form part of the fabric of the village's character.	Yes	0.3 ha
6 Village green	Quiet relaxing area in centre of village. Seating provided and owned by parish Council. Areas such as this are important to the local community for physical health, social and mental wellbeing and form part of the fabric of the village's character.	Yes	0.05 ha
7 Elm Lea Play Area	Well-used children's play area. Areas such as this are important to the local community for physical health, social and mental wellbeing and form part of the fabric of the village's character, Playing a particular importance for young families.	Yes	0.75 ha
8 Downend fields	Area used for walking and dog-walking crossed by footpaths. Areas such as this are important to the local community for physical health, social and mental wellbeing and form an important part of Downend's setting. The area provides one of the only opportunities locally for accessing	Yes	7.5 ha

Site	Local Significance to the Community	Close proximity to the community they serve and local in character?	Area (ha)
	the countryside for recreation, with the village being constrained on all sides to its south, west and north by main road infrastructure or employment / industrial areas. The area also provides rare unspoilt rural views. Evidence gathered from the neighbourhood plan questionnaire in 2019 identifies Downend fields as an area of green space which the residents would like to see protected (Sect 4: Q26).		
9 Horse fields	Crossed by footpaths leading to the woods and King Sedgemoor River,. Well-used by walkers. Areas such as this are important to the local community for physical health, social and mental wellbeing and form part of the fabric of the village's character and setting.	Yes	8.44 ha
10 Greenacres Play Area	Well-used play area. Areas such as this are important to the local community for physical health, social and mental wellbeing and particularly for young families.	Yes	0.15 ha
11 Puriton Woods (New Ground Covert)	Woodland important for biodiversity. Paths which run through the area are well-used. Areas such as this are important to the local community for physical health, social and mental wellbeing and form part of the fabric of the village's character and setting. Robust evidence drawn from the questionnaire suggests that 25% of respondents quoted this area as needing designation as an LGS. Of these, 71% use it for exercise, 79% use it for dog walking and to be	Yes	4.2 ha

Site	Local Significance to the Community	Close proximity to the community they serve and local in character?	Area (ha)
	near wildlife and nature, 77% appreciate the countryside views, 48% use it for recreation and play with 45% forage there (respondents could make multiple selections).		
12 Chisland Covert	Woodland important for biodiversity. Paths which run through the area are well-used. Areas such as this are important to the local community for physical health, social and mental wellbeing and form part of the fabric of the village's character and setting.	Yes	4 ha

POLICY BNE5: LOCAL GREEN SPACE

- 1. Our locally valued green spaces are identified on Map 23 and in Table 1 and are designated as Local Green Space in accordance with the requirements of the National Planning Policy Framework. These areas will be protected for their local environmental, heritage and / or recreational value.**
- 2. Development that would harm the openness and / or special character of a Local Green Space or its significance and value to the local community will not be permitted unless the proposal can demonstrate very special circumstances that outweigh the harm to the Local Green Space.**
- 3. Any development of such areas will be managed in accordance with national policy for Green Belt.**

11 Monitoring and Review

While there is no statutory requirement for the impact of this Plan and its policies to be monitored, the Parish Council will periodically monitor the impact of policies on change in the Parish by considering the policies' effectiveness in the planning application decision making process.

A full or partial review of this Plan is unlikely to be considered necessary during its lifetime unless triggered by changes to legislation, changes to national or District-wide planning policies or significant planning issues being raised by the local community which cannot be dealt with effectively by a combination of national, district and / or existing neighbourhood plan policies.

12 Appendices

See separate files.