

# Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) for the Dilton Marsh Neighbourhood Plan

## **Scoping Report**

Dilton Marsh Parish Council

November 2023

## Quality information

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## Revision History

Revision	Revision date	Details	Name	Position
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## Table of Contents

1.	Introduction .....	1
2.	Air Quality .....	5
3.	Biodiversity.....	9
4.	Climate Change (Including Flood Risk).....	17
5.	Community Wellbeing .....	29
6.	Historic Environment.....	37
7.	Landscape .....	43
8.	Land, Soil and Water Resources.....	50
9.	Transportation .....	56
10.	Next steps .....	61
	Appendix A Proposed SEA Framework .....	62

# 1. Introduction

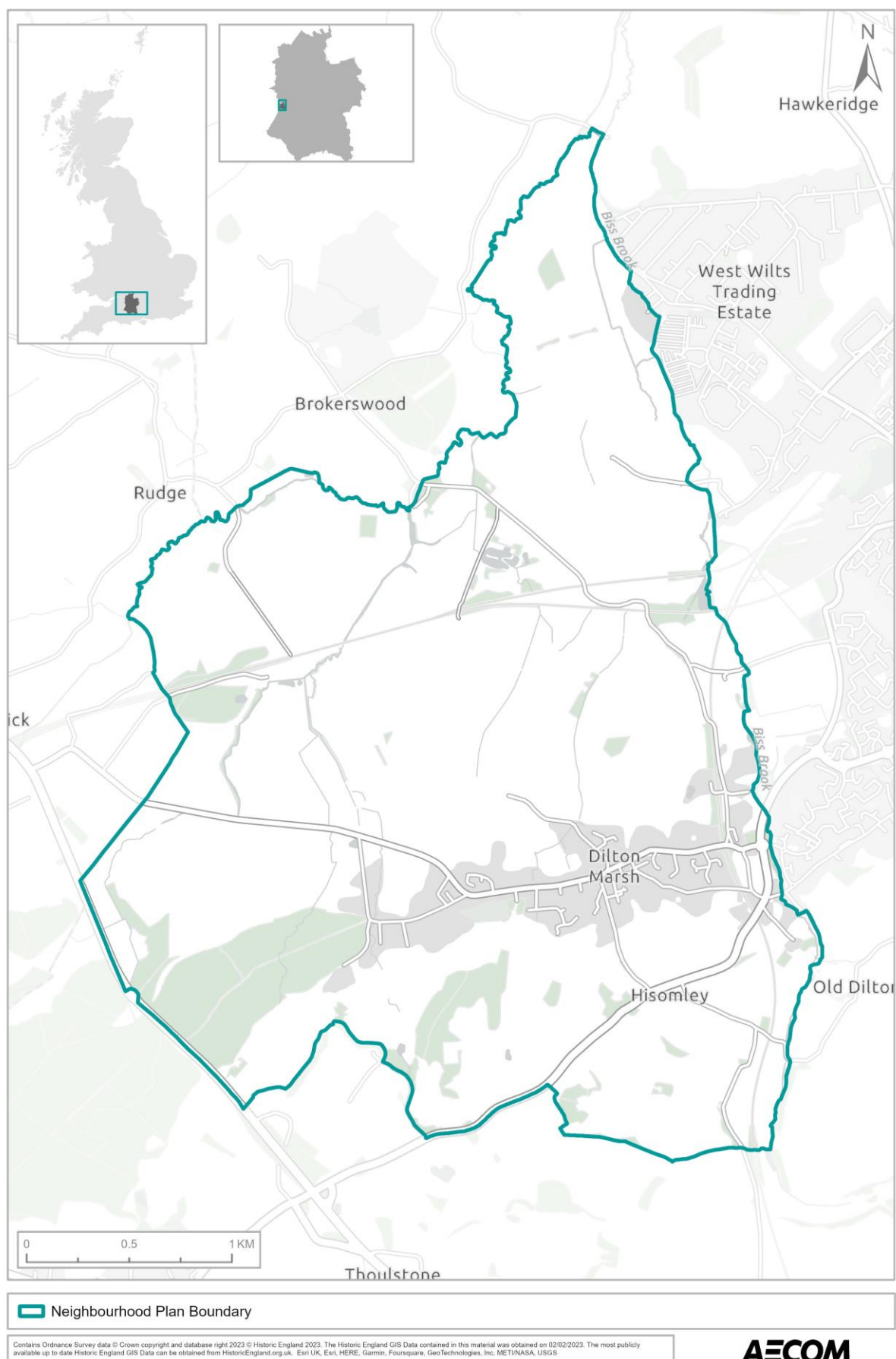
## Background

- 1.1 AECOM has been commissioned to undertake an independent Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) in support of the emerging Dilton Marsh Neighbourhood Plan (DMNP).
- 1.2 The DMNP is being prepared under the Localism Act 2011 and the Neighbourhood Planning (General) Regulations 2012 (as amended), and in the context of the local development framework for Wiltshire Council.
- 1.3 The Dilton Marsh neighbourhood area was designated in February 2017 and is depicted in **Figure 1-1**.

## Planning Policy Context

- 1.4 Dilton Marsh Parish lies within Wiltshire and is being developed in the context of Wiltshire Council's local development framework. The adopted planning framework consists of the Wiltshire Core Strategy (WCS), adopted in 2015. As the Local Plan is over five years old, work is now progressing to review the WCS. In September 2023, the Wiltshire Local Plan Regulation 19 (henceforth known as the 'emerging Local Plan') was submitted for consultation.
- 1.5 The WCS identifies Dilton Marsh as a 'Large Village' in the settlement hierarchy, which is the second to largest classification, below 'Market Towns'. The WCS does not set a housing target for Larger Villages; housing is expected to come forward through neighbourhood plans or through the development management process considered against relevant policies in the Dilton Marsh Neighbourhood Plan. However, in the emerging Local Plan, Dilton Marsh is identified as part of the 'Trowbridge Rural Area' and has been allocated a housing requirement of 61 homes by the end of the emerging Local Plan period (2038). As of March 2022, Dilton Marsh has 20 completions or commitments, leaving a residual housing target of 41 homes to be met through Neighbourhood Plan allocations.

**Figure 1-1: Dilton Marsh Neighbourhood Area**



## SEA Explained

### SEA Screening

- 1.6 SEA is a mechanism for considering and communicating the potential impacts of an emerging plan, and potential alternatives in terms of key environmental issues. The aim of the SEA is to inform and influence the plan-making process with a view to avoiding and mitigating potential negative impacts and maximising the potential for positive effects. Through this approach, the SEA for the DMNP seeks to maximise the emerging plan's contribution to sustainable development.
- 1.7 SEA is undertaken to meet the specific requirements prescribed by the Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations 2004 (the SEA Regulations).
- 1.8 The Dilton Marsh Neighbourhood Plan was screened by Wiltshire Council in 2023. The screening process is based upon consideration of standard criteria to determine whether the plan is likely to have “significant environmental effects”, and subsequently whether there is a need for Strategic Environmental Assessment. The screening concluded that an SEA (and Habitats Regulation Assessment [HRA]) is required because *‘there is potential for the Neighbourhood Plan to have significant effects on nearby international environmental designations - Salisbury Plain SPA and the Bath and Bradford on Avon Bats SAC. In addition, the need for appropriate assessment of the Plan under the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 (as amended) also means that SEA is required, irrespective of the separate screening for SEA’*.

### SEA Scoping Explained

- 1.9 This Scoping Report seeks to establish a suggested scope for the SEA. A key procedural requirements of the SEA Regulations is to present this scope for the SEA, so that the designated authorities (Historic England, Natural England and the Environment Agency) can provide timely comment.
- 1.10 Developing the draft scope for the SEA as presented in this report has involved the following steps:
  - Exploring the policy context for the DMNP and SEA to summarise the key messages arising;
  - Establishing the baseline for the SEA (i.e., the current and future situation in the area in the absence of the DMNP) to help identify the plan's likely significant effects;
  - Identifying particular problems or opportunities ('issues') that should be a particular focus of the SEA; and
  - Considering this information, developing an SEA framework comprising SEA objectives and assessment questions, which can then be used as a guiding framework for the subsequent assessment.
- 1.11 The scope is explored and presented under a series of key environmental themes as follows:

- Air quality
- Biodiversity
- Climate change
- Community wellbeing
- Historic environment
- Landscape
- Land, soil and water resources
- Transportation

1.12 The selected environmental themes incorporate the 'SEA topics' suggested by Annex I (f) of the SEA Directive.<sup>1</sup> These were refined to reflect a broad understanding of the anticipated scope of plan effects. The discussion of the scoping information for each theme is presented in Chapters 2 to 9, and the proposed SEA framework is brought together as a whole at Appendix A. Each proposal within the emerging DMNP will be assessed consistently using this framework.

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<sup>1</sup> The SEA Directive (Directive 2001/42/EC) is 'of a procedural nature' (para 9 of the Directive preamble) and does not set out to prescribe particular issues that should and should not be a focus, beyond requiring a focus on 'the environment, including on issues such as biodiversity, population, human health, fauna, flora, soil, water, air, climatic factors, material assets, cultural heritage including architectural and archaeological heritage, landscape and the interrelationship between the above factors'.

## 2. Air Quality

- 2.1 This theme focuses on air pollution, in particular: sources of air pollution, air quality hotspots, and areas known to exceed objectives for air quality.

### Policy Context

- 2.2 **Table 2-1** presents the most relevant documents identified in the policy review for the purposes of the SEA.

**Table 2-1: Plans, Policies and Strategies Reviewed in Relation to Air Quality**

Document Title	Year of Publication
<b>National</b>	
<a href="#"><u>The Environmental Targets (Fine Particular Matter) (England) Regulations 2023</u></a>	2023
<a href="#"><u>National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)</u></a>	2023
<a href="#"><u>Environment Act</u></a>	2021
<a href="#"><u>The Clean Air Strategy</u></a>	2019
<a href="#"><u>A Green Future: Our 25 Year Plan to Improve the Environment</u></a>	2018
<a href="#"><u>UK plan for tackling roadside nitrogen dioxide concentrations</u></a>	2017
<b>Local</b>	
<a href="#"><u>Wiltshire Council 2022 Air Quality Annual Status Report</u></a>	2022
<a href="#"><u>Wiltshire Council Air Quality Strategy 2019-2024</u></a>	2019
<a href="#"><u>Wiltshire Council Air Quality Action Plan</u></a>	2015
<a href="#"><u>Wiltshire Council - Wiltshire Core Strategy</u></a>	2015
<a href="#"><u>Wiltshire Council - Emerging Local Plan (Reg 19)</u></a>	(emerging; Reg 19 submitted in 2023)

- 2.3 The key messages emerging from the review are summarised below:

- The DMNP will be required to be in general conformity with the NPPF, which predominantly seeks early planning to reduce/ mitigate air quality impacts in development and to take advantage of opportunities to improve air quality. Measures to improve air quality include traffic and travel management and green infrastructure provision. Strategic development is expected to be focused on locations that have or will be provided with high levels of accessibility; supporting both a reduced need to travel and offering a genuine choice of transport modes. Smaller-scale development should consider the potential for cumulative effects in relation to air quality;



- The DMNP will also be required to be in general conformity with the Environment Act 2021, which introduces the need for the Secretary of State to set an annual mean particulate matter (PM2.5) level target. This links to the Environmental Targets (Fine Particulate Matter) (England) Regulations 2023, which sets out to ensure annual PM2.5 concentrations are equal to or less than 10 micrograms per cubic metre by the 31 December 2040;
- The Clean Air Strategy outlines how the government will tackle all sources of air pollution. The strategy proposes goals to cut public exposure to particulate matter pollution and outlines required action to meet these goals. Furthermore, it seeks to recognise wider sources that cause poor air quality, such as diffuse sources and smaller contributors. The proposed measures include new legislation and local powers to act in areas with air pollution issues. The Air Quality Strategy for Wiltshire (2019-2024) seeks to reflect this strategy on a more localised scale;
- The 25 Year Environment Plan establishes how the government will expand net gain approaches to include air quality improvements, such as planting more trees in urban areas and changing fuel supplies. In particular, 'Goal 1 Clean air' and the policies contained within 'Chapter 4: Increasing resource efficiency and reducing pollution and waste' directly relate to the air quality SEA theme;
- The UK plan for tackling roadside nitrogen dioxide is an air quality plan focused on bringing nitrogen dioxide (NO<sub>2</sub>) within statutory limits in the quickest time possible. The plan identifies that improving air quality and reducing carbon emissions is also important and wants to position the UK at the forefront of vehicle innovation by making motoring cleaner;
- Local authorities are required to monitor air quality across the district, report regularly to Defra and act where nationally set levels and limits of pollutants are likely to be exceeded under Section 82 of the Environment Act (1995). Monitoring is undertaken to assess levels of nitrogen dioxide, sulphur dioxide, ozone, benzene, and particulates. Where exceedances exist, areas are declared as air quality management areas (AQMAs) and local authorities are required to produce an air quality action plan (AQAP) to improve air quality in the area. Under Schedule 11 in the Environment Act (2021), a local authority must identify any parts of its area in which it appears air quality standards or objectives are not likely to be achieved within the relevant period. Additionally, local authorities must also identify relevant sources of emissions that are considered partly or wholly responsible for failing to achieve air quality standards or objectives in the area. As such, the Wiltshire 2022 Air Quality Annual Status Report (ASR) is the last available report for the neighbourhood area; fulfilling the requirements of the local air quality management (LAQM) as set out in Section 82 of the Environment Act (1995);
- The Air Quality Action Plan for Wiltshire sets out "the strategic and locally generated actions that will be implemented to improve air quality and work towards meeting the air quality objectives". This plan builds off the Air Quality Strategy for Wiltshire (2019-2024) and identifies 17 strategic actions that will help to achieve the goal of reducing levels of nitrogen dioxide and fine particulate matter in Wiltshire. A sample of those strategic actions include:

- Establish community air quality action plan groups under the Area Boards;
  - Provide air quality data and information to Area Boards to assist with the production of Community Air Quality Action Plans and Community Neighbourhood Plans;
  - Integrate air quality into wider policies and strategies within the council and the adoption of Core Policy 55 in the Wiltshire Core Strategy;
  - Integrate green infrastructure considerations into Wiltshire Council policy and strategy and to adopt the Wiltshire Council Green Infrastructure Strategy to support Core Policy 52 of the Wiltshire Core Strategy;
  - Integrate wider climate change policies that share common goals on carbon and nitrogen dioxide reduction into Wiltshire strategies and policies; and
  - Develop in conjunction with Public Health Wiltshire a text alert system which will be targeted at people with respiratory health issues.
- The DMNP will also need to consider the relevant policies that are outlined in the WCS. Examples of relevant policies include:
    - Core Policy 55: Air Quality; and
    - Core Policy 60: Sustainable Transport.
  - Due regard should also given to policies within the emerging Wiltshire Local Plan Review, which works to improve air quality by promoting sustainable transport, active transport and general air quality improvements. Examples of relevant policies include:
    - Policy 93: Green and Blue Infrastructure; and
    - Policy 101: Air Quality.

## Baseline Summary

### Current Baseline

- 2.4 Air Quality Management Areas (AQMAs) are declared in areas which exceed national objectives for levels of particulates, nitrogen dioxide, sulphur dioxide, ozone, benzene, polycyclic aromatic hydrocarbons, butadiene, carbon monoxide, lead and/ or nitrogen oxides.
- 2.5 According to the Wiltshire Council 2022 Air Quality ASR there are no AQMAs declared within Dilton Marsh; therefore, the neighbourhood area is not constrained in this respect. However, new development in the neighbourhood area has the potential to indirectly impact on AQMAs within Wiltshire. The nearest AQMA to the neighbourhood area is in Westbury, approximately 1.4 km east of the neighbourhood area, along the A350.
- 2.6 The neighbourhood area does not include an air quality monitoring site.
- 2.7 In terms of localised sources of air quality pollution, the neighbourhood area's road network consists mostly of lanes and country roads; however, there are two A Roads (A36 and A3098) and one B road (B3099). The Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group (NPSG) understand that it is on the A3098 (which

connects the neighbourhood area to Westbury) and the B3099 (which passes through Dilton Marsh village) where the neighbourhood area experiences its highest volumes of congestion.

- 2.8 The neighbourhood area has three train lines passing through it, which also represent a source of local air quality pollution: one running along the southern half of its eastern border, and another two which bisect the neighbourhood area across its central-northern belt.

## Future Baseline

- 2.9 The growth associated with future housing and employment provision within the neighbourhood area has the potential for adverse effects on air quality, due to increased levels of traffic and associated pollutants. However, given the low level of growth likely to be delivered through the DMNP (when compared to the levels of growth coming forward in the wider Trowbridge Rural Area during the emerging Local Plan period), this is unlikely to lead to exceedances of local air quality objectives. Furthermore, it is considered that suitable planning and mitigation measures will be incorporated in the design of new development.
- 2.10 In line with higher level planning policy, future development should contribute towards improving air quality, supporting opportunities to improve accessibility, particularly in terms of the use of sustainable modes of transport, including active travel modes, working from home and electric vehicle use.
- 2.11 While development in the neighbourhood area could increase travel to neighbouring and larger centres (such as Westbury) for employment, services/facilities, this is unlikely to lead to any significant increase in emissions, both locally or within the wider area.

## Key Issues

- 2.12 While air quality is not a significant constraint in the neighbourhood area, increased congestion and reduced air quality have the potential to negatively affect the health of residents. Such effects will be explored under the 'Community Wellbeing' SEA theme (**Chapter 5**).
- 2.13 Local congestion is seen on the A3098 and B3099. It is noted by the Parish Council that these roads have seen significant increases in vehicle use following the westward expansion of Westbury at Leigh Park. The effects of the DMNP in relation to traffic and congestion, especially on the A3098 and B3099, will be explored under the 'Transportation' SEA theme (**Chapter 9**).
- 2.14 The DMNP also presents opportunities to enhance accessibility and support more local and sustainable journeys / connections around the neighbourhood area. These opportunities will also be explored under the 'Transportation' theme (**Chapter 9**).
- 2.15 Considering the above, within the neighbourhood area there is an absence of any significant air quality issues (i.e., AQMAs) and there are no exceeded or expected exceedances of national air quality objectives. Therefore, **the Air Quality theme has been scoped out for the purposes of the SEA process.**

## 3. Biodiversity

### Focus of Theme

- 3.1 This theme focuses on nature conservation designations, habitats, and species within and surrounding the neighbourhood area.

### Policy Context

- 3.2 **Table 3-1** presents the most relevant documents identified in the policy review for the purposes of the SEA.

**Table 3-1: Plans, Policies and Strategies Reviewed in Relation to Biodiversity**

Document Title	Year of Publication
<b>National</b>	
<a href="#"><u>National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)</u></a>	2023
<a href="#"><u>Natural England Green Infrastructure Framework</u></a>	2023
<a href="#"><u>Environment Act 2021</u></a>	2021
<a href="#"><u>A Green Future: Our 25 Year Plan to Improve the Environment</u></a>	2018
<a href="#"><u>UK Post-2010 Biodiversity Framework</u></a>	2012
<a href="#"><u>The Natural Choice: securing the value of nature (Natural Environment White Paper)</u></a>	2011
<a href="#"><u>Biodiversity 2020 Strategy</u></a>	2011
<a href="#"><u>The Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act</u></a>	2006
<a href="#"><u>UK Biodiversity Action Plan</u></a>	1994
<b>Local</b>	
<a href="#"><u>A Green &amp; Blue Infrastructure Strategy for Wiltshire</u></a>	2022
<a href="#"><u>Wiltshire Council - Wiltshire Core Strategy</u></a>	2015
<a href="#"><u>Wiltshire Council - Emerging Local Plan (Reg 19)</u></a>	(emerging; Reg 19 submitted in 2023)
<a href="#"><u>Wiltshire Biodiversity Action Plan</u></a>	2008

- 3.3 The key messages emerging from the review are summarised below:
- The DMNP will need to consider the principles set out in the NPPF, which indicate that planning policies and decisions should protect and enhance sites of value for biodiversity. Plans should also identify, map, and safeguard components of wider ecological networks, promote positive action for priority habitats and species, and pursue opportunities to secure biodiversity net gains. The NPPF also states that if development causes substantial harm

and cannot be avoided, adequately mitigated, or compensated, then planning permission should be refused;

- The Natural England Green Infrastructure Framework provides a structure to analyse where greenspace in urban environments is needed most. It aims to support equitable access to greenspace across the country, with an overarching target for everyone being able to reach good quality greenspace in their local area. The framework's ultimate goal aims to help increase the amount of green cover in England to 40% in urban residential areas;
- The Environment Act makes provision for biodiversity gain to be a condition of planning permission in England, in addition to creating biodiversity gain site registers and biodiversity credits. It recognises there is a duty to conserve and enhance biodiversity and encourages the identification of suitable areas through biodiversity reports and local nature recovery strategies. Furthermore, habitat maps are expected to include recovery and enhancement areas which are currently, or could become, important for biodiversity;
- The NPPF also supports the establishment and enhancement of habitat networks and green infrastructure to allow for more resilience to current and future pressures for biodiversity;
- Over the past decade, policy (for example, The Natural Environment White Paper and Biodiversity 2020) has demonstrated a move away from the traditional approach of protecting biodiversity, to a wider landscape approach to enhancing biodiversity, as part of the overall aims to halt biodiversity loss. The 25 Year Environment Plan places emphasis on improvements to the natural environment; identifying the need to *“replenish depleted soil, plant trees, support wetlands and peatlands, rid seas and rivers of rubbish, reduce greenhouse gas emissions, cleanse the air of pollutants, develop cleaner, sustainable energy and protect threatened species and habitats”*. Working at a landscape scale transformation is expected to connect habitats into larger corridors for wildlife;
- The UK Biodiversity Action Plan (BAP) is a response to the Convention on Biological Diversity, which calls for the development and enforcement of national strategies and associated action plans to identify, conserve and protect existing biological diversity, and to enhance it wherever possible. In particular, the BAP identifies priority species and habitats that are most threatened and require conservation action. The UK BAP is succeeded by the UK Post-2010 Biodiversity Framework, which aims to ensure that biodiversity is valued, conserved, restored, and wisely used, and ecosystem services are maintained. This helps to sustain a healthy planet that delivers essential benefits for everyone;
- Wiltshire Green & Blue Infrastructure Strategy is Wiltshire's natural environment plan sets out the overarching framework for Wiltshire supported by local Settlement Frameworks that identify needs, opportunities and guiding principles for provision of green and blue infrastructure in and around Wiltshire's principal settlements and market towns;
- The DMNP will also need to consider the relevant policies that are outlined in the WCS. Examples of relevant policies include:
  - Core Policy 50: Biodiversity and Geodiversity;

- Core Policy 52: Green Infrastructure; and
- Core Policy 69: Protection of the River Avon SAC.
- Due regard should also be given to policies within the emerging Wiltshire Local Plan Review, which works to enhance biodiversity and geodiversity by enhancing blue and green infrastructure and biodiversity itself. Examples of relevant policies include:
  - Policy 88: Biodiversity and Geodiversity;
  - Policy 89: Biodiversity Net Gain;
  - Policy 90: Woodland, Hedgerows and Trees; and
  - Policy 93: Green and Blue Infrastructure.
- Finally, the Wiltshire Biodiversity Action Plan contains habitat action plans for the variety of habitats found across the area. It sets out the following priorities for the area:
  - To prioritise action required to conserve Wiltshire's biodiversity;
  - To provide baseline information on our current knowledge;
  - To coordinate and focus action for biodiversity by creating a cohesive local partnership;
  - To raise awareness among all sectors in Wiltshire – conservation, public, private, local communities;
  - To provide a framework for monitoring; and
  - To identify current issues and set out targets to work towards.

## Baseline Summary

### Current Baseline

#### *Internationally and Nationally Important Sites*

- 3.4 There are no international designated biodiversity sites within or adjacent to the neighbourhood area. The closest internationally designated biodiversity sites are: River Avon Special Area of Conservation (SAC; which overlaps with the River Avon System SSSI), approximately 5 km south-east; and Salisbury Plain Special Protection Area, approximately 6.4 km east.
- 3.5 Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) are protected (of national importance) to conserve their wildlife and / or geological value. There is one SSSI within Dilton Marsh: Westbury Ironstone Quarry, located in the central-eastern region of the neighbourhood area (see **Figure 3-1**). Covering a total area of 0.62 ha, it is designated as the '*...type locality for the Upper Oxfordian Westbury Iron Ore, a localised ferruginous deposit whose stratigraphic relationships indicate shoaling, with marine oolites (possibly lagoonal), with iron derived from rivers draining the northern and western shorelines of the London-Brabant Landmass*'.<sup>2</sup> According to the latest condition survey in 2010, this SSSI was in 'unfavourable-no change' condition.<sup>3</sup>

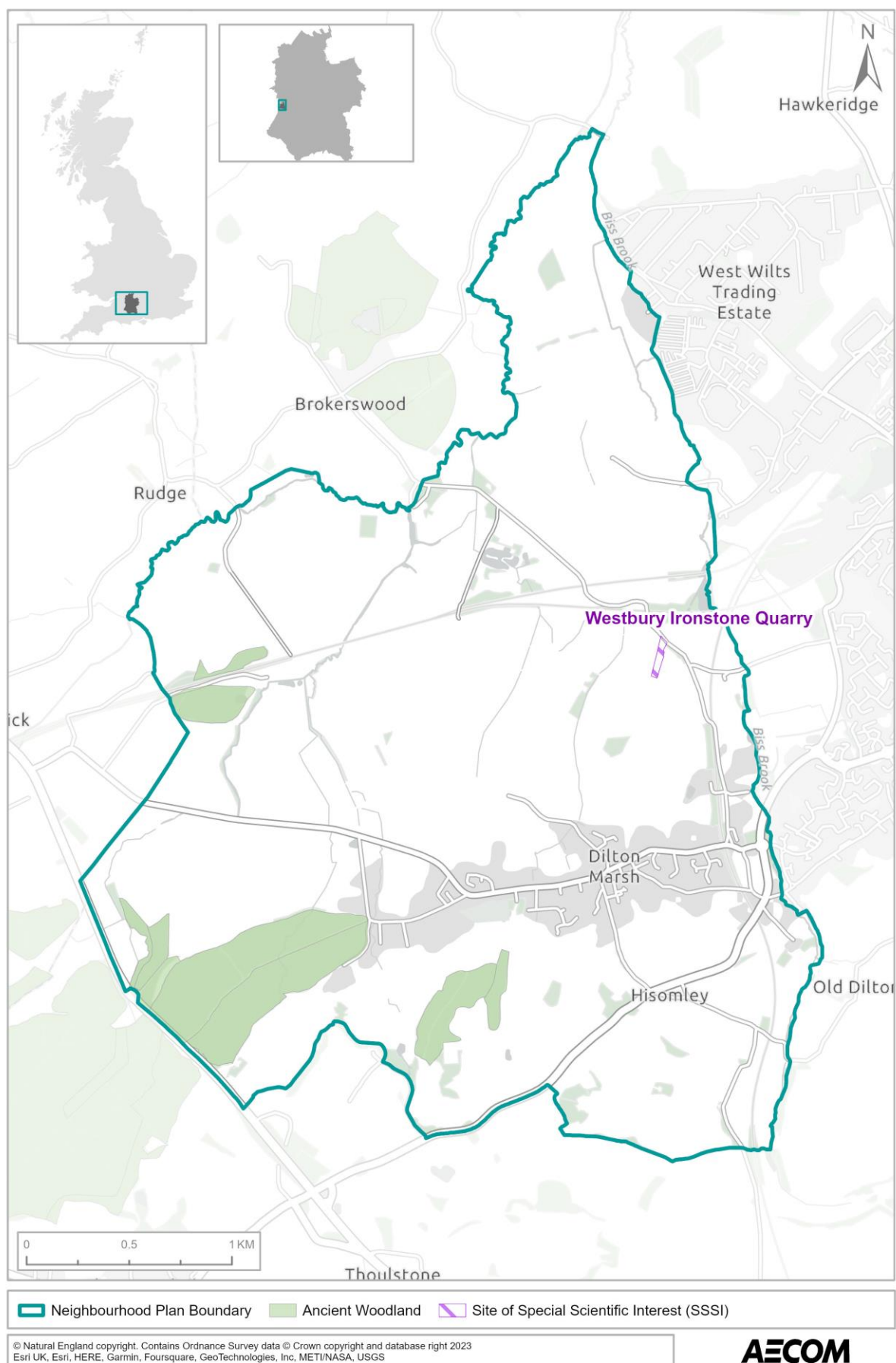
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<sup>2</sup> Natural England (no date) 'Westbury Ironstone Quarry' can be accessed [here](#).

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid*



**Figure 3-1: Biodiversity Designations in the Neighbourhood Area**



3.6 There are six other SSSI within 5 km of the neighbourhood area boundary. These are:

- Upton Cow Down SSSI, approximately 1.2 km east;
- Salisbury Plain SSSI, approximately 2 km east;
- Picket and Clanger Wood SSSI, approximately 2.2 km east;
- Bratton Downs SSSI, approximately 3 km east;
- Cley Hill SSSI, approximately 3.2 km south;
- River Avon System SSSI, approximately 5 km south-east;

3.7 SSSI Impact Risk Zones (IRZ) are a GIS tool/dataset that map zones around each SSSI according to their sensitivities. They specify the types of development that have the potential to have adverse impacts at a given location, and thresholds of development which indicate a need to consult Natural England. In this respect, the entirety of the neighbourhood area overlaps with IRZs for all development types; therefore, consultation with Natural England may be required for any applications that come forward in these locations.

#### *Locally Important Sites*

3.8 Within the neighbourhood area there are eight County Wildlife Sites (CWS) comprising a mixed of broadleaved woodland; fen, marsh and swamp; neutral grassland; and calcareous grassland.

3.9 There are no Local Nature Reserves or Nature Reserves within 2 km of the neighbourhood area.

#### *Priority Habitats and Species*

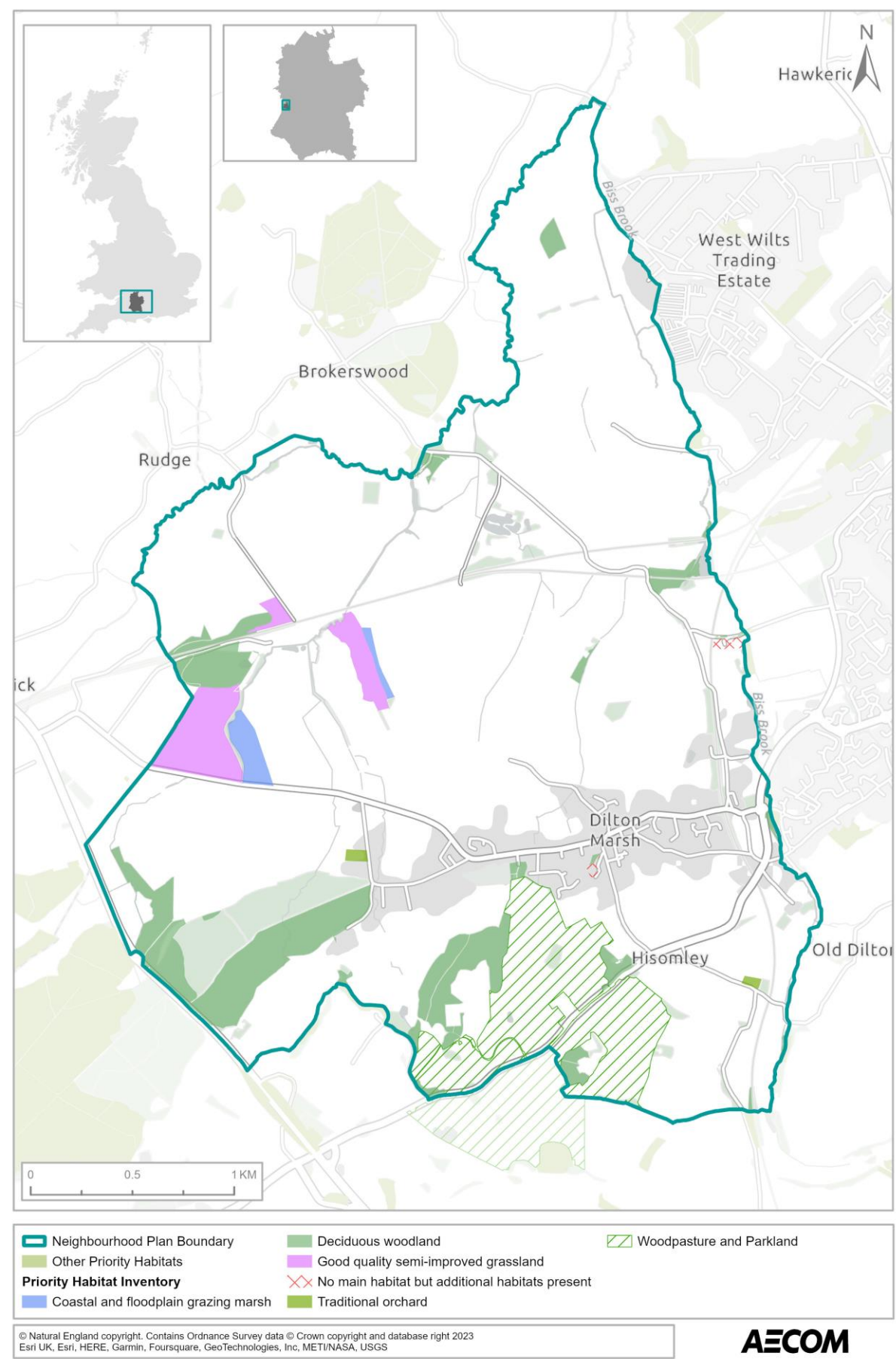
3.10 The neighbourhood area is interspersed with a range of Biodiversity Action Plan (BAP) Priority Habitats, as shown in **Figure 3-2**.

3.11 The most common BAP Priority Habitat is Deciduous Woodland, which is present in various pockets scattered across the neighbourhood area. The largest area of the habitat is found in the south-west region of the neighbourhood area. There is also a large area of Wood-pasture and Parkland located adjacent to the south of Dilton Marsh village.

3.12 Less common BAP Priority Habitats, present in the neighbourhood area, include: located south of Dilton Marsh village; and Coastal and Floodplain Grazing Marsh / Good Quality Semi Improved Grassland, located in the central-eastern region of the neighbourhood area.



Figure 3-2: Biodiversity Action Plan Priority Habitats in the Neighbourhood Area



3.13 Ancient woodland takes hundreds of years to establish. It is considered important for its wildlife (often including rare and threatened species), and soils. Ancient woodland includes land that has been wooded continuously since at least 1600 AD. This means the following is included under its designation:

- Ancient semi-natural woodland mainly made up of trees and shrubs native to the site, usually arising from natural regeneration; and
- Plantations on ancient woodland sites - replanted with conifer and broadleaved trees that retain ancient woodland features, such as undisturbed soil, ground flora and fungi.<sup>4</sup>

3.14 Within the neighbourhood area there are three areas of Ancient Woodland (Black Dog's Wood North, Tennis Corner Wood, Chalcot Wood), located in the southern, and western regions of the neighbourhood area (see **Figure 3-1**).

3.15 The national habitat network is a set of maps that work to help identify areas for future habitat creation and restoration at a landscape scale.<sup>5</sup> In terms of the national habitat network, there are areas of Network Enhancement Zone 1 (deemed most suitable for habitat re-creation supporting the primary habitat), Network Enhancement Zone 2 (most suitable for new habitats and green infrastructure), and Network Expansion Zone (identified as a suitable location for connecting and linking up habitats across a landscape through new habitat creation) in the central-western region of the neighbourhood area. Network Enhancement Zone 2 also exists in south-eastern region of the neighbourhood area.

3.16 The Wiltshire and Swindon Biological Records Centre (WSBRC)<sup>6</sup> contains archives of protected and notable species within Wiltshire and Swindon, including those species protected by the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981<sup>7</sup> and under Section 41 of the Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006. The BAP Priority Habitats and ecological designations within and surrounding the neighbourhood area are likely to support populations of protected species.

## Future Baseline

3.17 Habitats and species will potentially face increasing pressures from future development within the neighbourhood area, with the potential for negative impacts on the wider ecological network. This may include a loss of habitats and impacts on biodiversity networks, which may be exacerbated by the effects of climate change. This has the potential to lead to changes in the distribution and abundance of species and changes to the composition of habitats.

3.18 The neighbourhood area presents an opportunity to maximise benefits for biodiversity by including consideration of important habitats, species, and designated sites at an early stage of planning for future growth. To maintain and improve the condition of biodiversity in the future, it will be important to not only protect and enhance important habitats, but also the connections between them. It will be crucial to effectively coordinate the delivery of new development

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<sup>4</sup> GOV.UK (2022) 'Ancient woodland, ancient trees and veteran trees: advice for making planning decisions' can be accessed [here](#).

<sup>5</sup> Natural England (2020) 'National Habitat Network Maps' can be accessed [here](#).

<sup>6</sup> The Wiltshire and Swindon Biological Records Centre (WSBRC) website can be accessed [here](#).

<sup>7</sup> UK Government (1981) 'The Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981' can be accessed [here](#).

to ensure that opportunities to improve green infrastructure and ecological corridors are maximised within the neighbourhood area.

## Key issues

- 3.19 New development through the neighbourhood plan may impact the integrity of Westbury Ironstone Quarry SSSI, if brought forward within its proximity.
- 3.20 Ecological networks, including BAP Priority Habitats, may be impacted by new development which comes forward within the neighbourhood area, which may result in the fragmentation of important natural corridors.

## SEA Objective

- 3.21 Considering the key issues discussed above, it is proposed that the SEA should include the following objective and assessment questions in relation to Biodiversity:

**Table 3-2: Proposed SEA objective for Biodiversity**

SEA Objective	Assessment Questions (Will the Option / Proposal Help to...)
Maintain and enhance the extent and quality of biodiversity habitats and networks within and surrounding the neighbourhood area.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Protect and enhance nationally, and locally designated sites, including supporting habitats and mobile species that are important to the integrity of these sites?</li> <li>• Protect and enhance priority habitats and the links between them?</li> <li>• Achieve a net gain in biodiversity?</li> <li>• Support habitat restoration or new habitat creation within the identified Network Enhancement or Expansion Zones?</li> <li>• Support enhancements to multifunctional green infrastructure networks and the network of open spaces?</li> </ul>

## 4. Climate Change (Including Flood Risk)

- 4.1 This theme focuses on activities in the neighbourhood area that contribute to climate change and climate change mitigation, as well as the effects of climate change, including flood risk, and climate change adaptation.

### Policy Context

- 4.2 **Table 4-1** presents the most relevant documents identified in the policy review for the purposes of the SEA.

**Table 4-1: Plans, Policies and Strategies Reviewed in Relation to Climate Change and Flood Risk**

Document Title	Year of Publication
<b>National</b>	
<a href="#"><u>National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)</u></a>	2023
<a href="#"><u>UK Climate Change Risk Assessment</u></a>	2022
<a href="#"><u>The National Design Guide</u></a>	2021
<a href="#"><u>National Model Design Code</u></a>	2021
<a href="#"><u>National Infrastructure Assessment</u></a>	2021
<a href="#"><u>Net Zero Strategy: Build Back Greener</u></a>	2021
<a href="#"><u>UK Sixth Carbon Budget</u></a>	2020
<a href="#"><u>National Flood and Coastal Erosion Risk Management Strategy</u></a>	2020
<a href="#"><u>Heat Networks: Building a Market Framework</u></a>	2020
<a href="#"><u>The Clean Air Strategy</u></a>	2019
<a href="#"><u>Clean Growth Strategy</u></a>	2019
<a href="#"><u>25-Year Environment Plan</u></a>	2019
<a href="#"><u>UK (second) National Adaptation Programme 2018 to 2023</u></a>	2018
<a href="#"><u>How Local Authorities Can Reduce Emissions and Manage Climate Change Risk</u></a>	2012
<a href="#"><u>Flood and Water Management Act</u></a>	2010
<a href="#"><u>UK Climate Change Act</u></a>	2008
<b>Local</b>	
<a href="#"><u>Anthesis Reports - Wiltshire Council (downloadable from here)</u></a>	2022

Document Title	Year of Publication
<a href="#"><u>Wiltshire Climate Strategy 2022-2027</u></a>	2022
<a href="#"><u>JBA Consulting - Wiltshire Council Level 1 Strategic Flood Risk Assessment</u></a>	2019
<a href="#"><u>Wiltshire Local Flood Risk Management Strategy</u></a>	2015
<a href="#"><u>Wiltshire Council - Wiltshire Core Strategy</u></a>	2015
<a href="#"><u>Wiltshire Council - Emerging Local Plan (Reg 19)</u></a>	(emerging; Reg 19 submitted in 2023)

#### 4.3 The key messages emerging from the review are summarised below:

- The DMNP will be required to be in general conformity with the NPPF, which requires proactive planning to both mitigate and adapt to climate change. Planning policies are expected to improve the resilience of communities and infrastructure to climate change impacts, avoid inappropriate development in the flood plain, and support the move to a low carbon economy. The NPPF recognises the potential for planning to shape places in ways that contribute to radical reductions in greenhouse gas emissions, and deliver long-term resilience, including through reuse, regeneration, and conversion;
- The UK Climate Change Risk Assessment is published on a 5-yearly cycle in accordance with the requirements of the Climate Change Act 2008. It required the Government to compile an assessment of the risks for the UK arising from climate change, and then to develop an adaptation programme to address those risks and deliver resilience to climate change on the ground. For both the 2012 and the 2017 UK Climate Change Risk Assessment, the Adaptation Sub-Committee commissioned an evidence report aiming to understand the current and future climate risks and opportunities. The evidence report contains six priority risk areas requiring additional action between 2017 and 2022, see below:
  - Flooding and coastal change risks to communities, businesses, and infrastructure.
  - Risks to health, well-being, and productivity from high temperatures.
  - Risk of shortages in the public water supply, and for agriculture, energy generation and industry.
  - Risks to natural capital, including terrestrial, coastal, marine, and freshwater ecosystems, soils, and biodiversity.
  - Risks to domestic and international food production and trade; and
  - New and emerging pests and diseases, and invasive non-native species, affecting people, plants, and animals.
- Following the publication of each Change Risk Assessment, the Government must lay out its objectives, policies, and proposals to address the climate change risks and opportunities. The second National Adaptation Programme (NAP2, 2018-2023), setting out these objectives, policies, and proposals, was published in 2018. The ASC is required by the Act to assess the NAP and present progress reports. The most recent report was published in 2019, concluding that climate change adaptation needs to be addressed at a



national scale and the Government's response to date has not been successful.<sup>8</sup> The Sixth Carbon Budget, required under the Climate Change Act, is the legal limit of UK net greenhouse gas emissions and requires the country to reduce emissions by 78% by 2035 relative to 1990 levels. This puts the country on track to achieve net-zero emissions by 2050 at the latest;

- The National Design Guide (NDG) and the National Design Code address how the Government recognises “well-designed places” including opportunities for climate change measures. Notably the NDG defines what constitutes a well-designed place using ten characteristics under three themes of climate, character, and community. Under the climate theme, homes and buildings should be functional, healthy, and sustainable, resources should be efficient and resilient, and buildings should be made to last;
- The National Infrastructure Assessment is published every five years and analyses the UK's long-term economic infrastructure needs to create a strategic vision and recommendations. The baseline report states that climate change will increase pressures on all sectors, including economic infrastructure;
- The Clean Growth Strategy, Clean Air Strategy, Net Zero Strategy, and the 25-year Environment Plan are a suite of documents which seek to progress the government's commitment under the UK Climate Change Act to becoming net zero by 2050. The documents set out detailed proposals on how the government will tackle all sources of air pollution, whilst maintaining an affordable energy supply and increasing economic growth. This parallels with the 25-year Environment Plan, which further seeks to manage land resources sustainably, recover and reinstate nature, protect soils and habitats, increase resource efficiency, improve water quality, and connect people with the environment. The documents also interlink with the government's commitment to decarbonising transport, a recognised challenge that needs more work in a timely manner if government are to achieve net zero targets. Furthermore, the decarbonisation plan recognises the twinned need to undertake action to adapt the transport sector and increase resilience to climate change risks; and this challenge is more directly addressed through the UK's National Adaptation Programme;
- The Flood and Water Management Act was introduced in 2010 as a response to the need to develop better resilience to climate change. The Act requires better management of flood risk, creating safeguards against rises in surface water drainage charges, and protecting water supplies for consumers. Good flood and coastal risk management is further outlined through the National Flood and Coastal Erosion Risk Management Strategy (2020);
- The Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy released a framework for heat networks which includes proposals to increase access to renewable heat sources and achieve a net zero target by 2050;
- The Committee of Climate Change's 2012 report entitled 'How Local Authorities Can Reduce Emissions and Manage Climate Change Risk' emphasises the crucial role councils have in helping the UK meet its carbon

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<sup>8</sup> Climate Change Committee (n.d.) 'UK adaptation policy' can be accessed [here](#).

targets and preparing for the impacts of climate change. It outlines specific opportunities for reducing emissions and highlights good practice examples from Local Authorities;

- Wiltshire Council declared a climate emergency in February 2019<sup>9</sup>; since this declaration, the council has sought to make the county of Wiltshire carbon neutral by 2030. A Global Warming and Climate Emergency Task Group was set up to gather evidence and suggest recommendations on achieving net zero. An update on the situation in July 2021<sup>10</sup> reinstated the following priorities:
  - Growing the economy;
  - Strong communities;
  - Protecting the vulnerable; and
  - Working with partners.
- Wiltshire Council have commissioned an independent consultant to provide a technical study of the area's climate ambitions in order to clearly see a way forward and to visualise progress. The Anthesis reports set out a plan for climate action across six areas:
  - Buildings
    - Improving energy efficiency;
    - Reducing gas heating systems; and
    - Low carbon and energy efficient cooking, lighting and appliances.
  - Transport
    - Travelling shorter distances;
    - Driving less;
    - Switching to electric vehicles; and
    - Improving freight emissions.
  - Waste
    - Reducing the quantity of waste; and
    - Increasing the recycling rate.
  - Industry
    - Shifting away from fossil fuels; and
    - More efficient processes.
  - Natural environment
    - Increased tree coverage and tree planting;
    - Land use management; and
    - Livestock management.
  - Energy supply

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<sup>9</sup> Wiltshire Council (2022) 'Climate emergency' can be accessed [here](#).

<sup>10</sup> Wiltshire Council (2021) 'Update on Council's response to the climate emergency' can be accessed [here](#).

- Increase solar photovoltaic (PV) capacity; and
- Increase the capacity of other renewable technologies.

The reports also undertake an emissions analysis and recommend how changes to the carbon footprint can be achieved through a variety of activities, like decarbonisation efforts;

- The Wiltshire Climate Strategy builds on the current evidence base to outline how Wiltshire can reduce its impact on climate change and become climate neutral by 2030. The strategy is split into eight different sections:
  - Transport;
  - Homes and the Built Environment;
  - Natural environment, food and farming;
  - Energy;
  - Green economy;
  - Resources and waste;
  - Carbon neutral council; and
  - Strategies and targets timeline.

The strategy ensures the transition to a low carbon, climate resilient future is accessible and manageable for all, using the most up-to-date evidence to deliver benefits to the area;

- The Wiltshire Council Level 1 Strategic Flood Risk Assessment (SFRA) forms part of a comprehensive and robust evidence base for the Local Plan Review, which will set out a vision and framework for development in Wiltshire up to 2036. The SFRA will also be used to assess planning applications, and flood risk mapping information will be made available for developers for carrying out flood risk assessments;
- The Wiltshire Local Flood Risk Management Strategy has an overarching vision of ‘working together to manage local flood risk in Wiltshire.’ Several strategic measures are identified to address the following five objectives:
  - Improve knowledge regarding flood risk;
  - Improve protection from flooding;
  - Improve resilience to flooding;
  - Improve the environment; and
  - Improve communications and flooding issues.
- The DMNP will also be required to be in general conformity with the policies of the WCS, which contains policies directly relating to the climate change theme, including flood management and sustainable design. Examples of relevant policies include:
  - Core Policy 41: Sustainable Construction and Low Carbon Energy;
  - Core Policy 42: Standalone Renewable Energy Installations; and
  - Core Policy 67: Flood Risk.



- Due regard should also be given to policies within the emerging Wiltshire Local Plan Review. Examples of relevant policies include:
  - Policy 85: Sustainable construction and low carbon energy;
  - Policy 86: Renewable energy;
  - Policy 87: Embodied carbon; and
  - Policy 95: Flood risk.

## Baseline Summary

### *Climate Emergency*

- 4.4 Wiltshire Council declared a climate emergency in February 2019, agreeing to setting the District on a pathway towards carbon neutrality by 2030. Since the climate emergency was confirmed in Wiltshire, a new climate strategy has been adopted to enable the Council to meet these commitments.

### *Contribution to Climate Change*

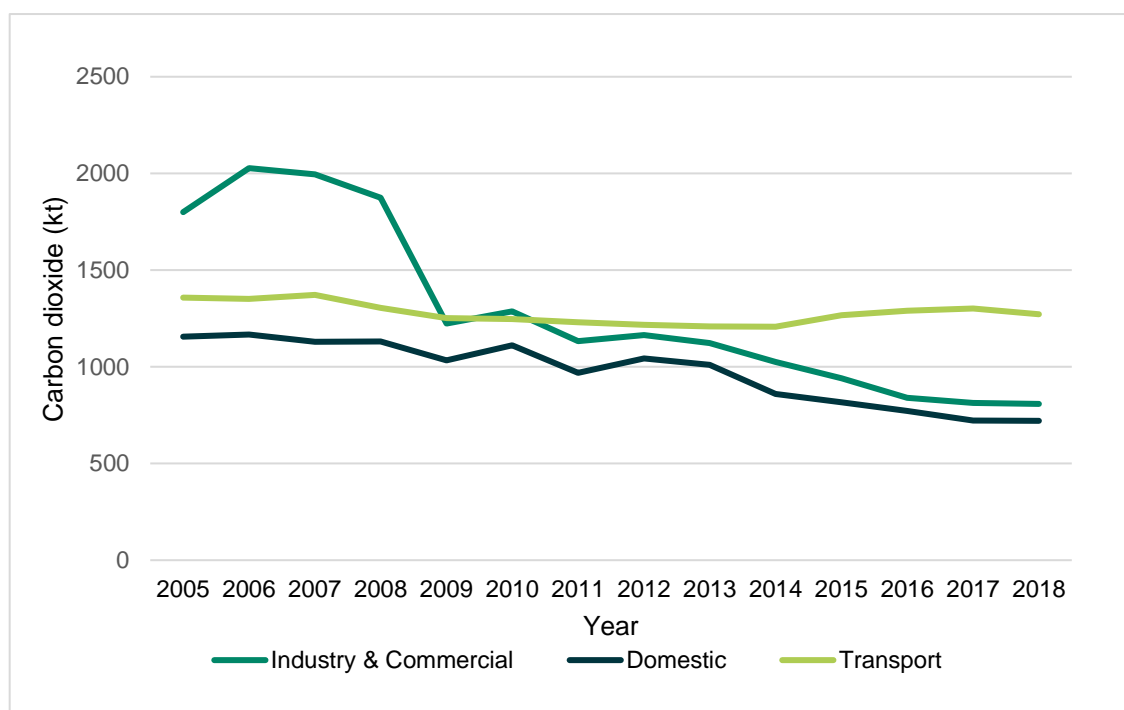
- 4.5 The Climate Change Act 2008 (2050 Target Amendment) Order of 2019 requires carbon dioxide (CO<sub>2</sub>) emissions from the built environment to be monitored and recorded at the local authority level. The CO<sub>2</sub> emissions shown in **Figure 4-1** and **Figure 4-2** are derived from data supplied by the Department for Business, Energy, and Industrial Strategy.<sup>11</sup>
- 4.6 Beginning with **Figure 4-1**, it shows that the largest contributing sector with regards to CO<sub>2</sub> emissions in Wiltshire was the industry and commercial sector until 2011, where the transportation sector contributed more and has continued to do so. The transport sector has been decreasing in terms of CO<sub>2</sub> emissions since 2017 but still remains the biggest emissions contributor in Wiltshire.
- 4.7 The introduction and uptake of Ultra Low Emission Vehicles (ULEVs) will contribute positively towards the reduction of road transport related emissions. In line with assumptions made by the Department for Transport's 'Road to Zero' report (2018),<sup>12</sup> it is assumed that ULEV uptake will increase rapidly in the coming decade. Therefore, all vehicles could be ultra-low emission (powered either by hydrogen or electricity) by 2030, thus the CO<sub>2</sub> emissions from the transport sector have the potential to decrease.

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<sup>11</sup> Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy (2020) 'UK local authority and regional carbon dioxide emissions national statistics: 2005-2008' can be accessed [here](#). The data tables used to generate Figures 4.1 and 4.2 can be downloaded from this page.

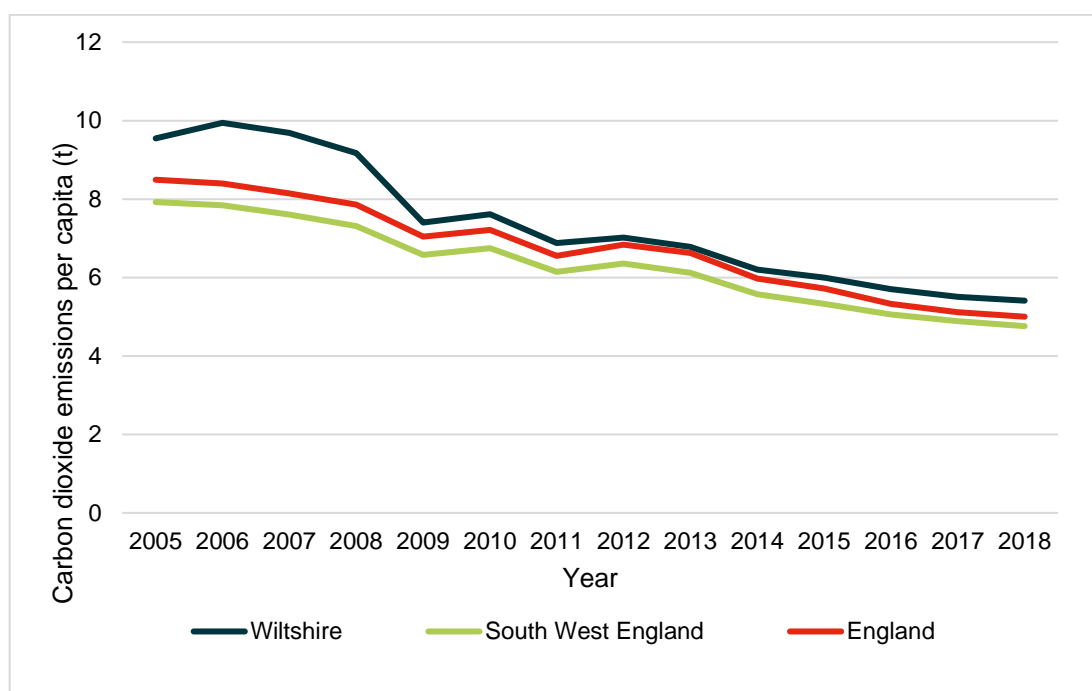
<sup>12</sup> Department for Transport (2018) 'The Road to Zero' can be accessed [here](#).

**Figure 4-1: CO<sub>2</sub> emissions in kilotons per year for each sector in Wiltshire (2005-2018)**



4.8 **Figure 4-2** indicates that CO<sub>2</sub> emissions per capita have been higher in Wiltshire than the average for South West England and the whole of England between 2005-2018. Wiltshire has experienced the greatest decrease in per capita emissions over the examined period; a decrease of 4.1 tons per capita. This is in comparison to an average of 3.2 tons per capita in South West England and 3.5 tons per capita for England.

**Figure 4-2: CO<sub>2</sub> emissions per capita (in tons) for Wiltshire, the South West England region and the whole of England (2005-2018)**



### *Renewable Energy*

- 4.9 Electric Vehicles (EVs) do not burn fuel and create almost no noise. They are battery powered and have the potential to be 'zero-emission vehicles' (ZEVs) if powered by renewable electricity. As of October 2022, there were 184 public electric charging devices in Wiltshire.<sup>13</sup> There are no electric charging points within the neighbourhood area, however there are three points nearby in neighbouring Westbury, to the east.<sup>14</sup>
- 4.10 In terms of renewable energy, the Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy publishes annual statistics on renewable energy generation, disaggregated by Local Authority.<sup>15</sup> The most recent data (to 2022) shows that Wiltshire has a total of 13,422 renewable energy (electricity) installations (the majority of which are photovoltaics), amounting to a total renewable electricity capacity of 583.5 MW.

### *Flood Risk*

- 4.11 Fluvial flood risk in the neighbourhood area largely follows the River Biss, a tributary of the River Avon (located on the southern boundary line), with the areas closest to this watercourse within Flood Zone 3. As shown in **Figure 4-3**, these higher-risk areas are primarily concentrated in the northern region of the neighbourhood area, particularly where the border and the River Biss overlap. Areas of High and Medium risk of surface water flooding also broadly follow the River Biss, as demonstrated in **Figure 4-4** overleaf. The two figures show that the village of Dilton Marsh and the land surrounding it, where the focus of future development is most likely to occur, has a relatively low fluvial and surface water flood risk.
- 4.12 NPSG note that areas vulnerable to flooding include the area where St Mary's Lane crosses the stream, and a section of the High Street just west of the main entrance to Fairfield College, which have both experienced flooding events in the recent past.
- 4.13 Additionally, NSPG note that there is a sewage system which dates mainly from the mid-1960s with a wastewater treatment works located to the north-west of the village.

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<sup>13</sup> HM Gov (2022) 'Electric vehicle charging device statistics: October 2022' can be accessed [here](#).

<sup>14</sup> Zap Map (2023) can be accessed [here](#).

<sup>15</sup> DBEIS (2022) 'Regional Renewable Statistics' can be accessed [here](#).

Figure 4-3: Fluvial flood risk in the neighbourhood area

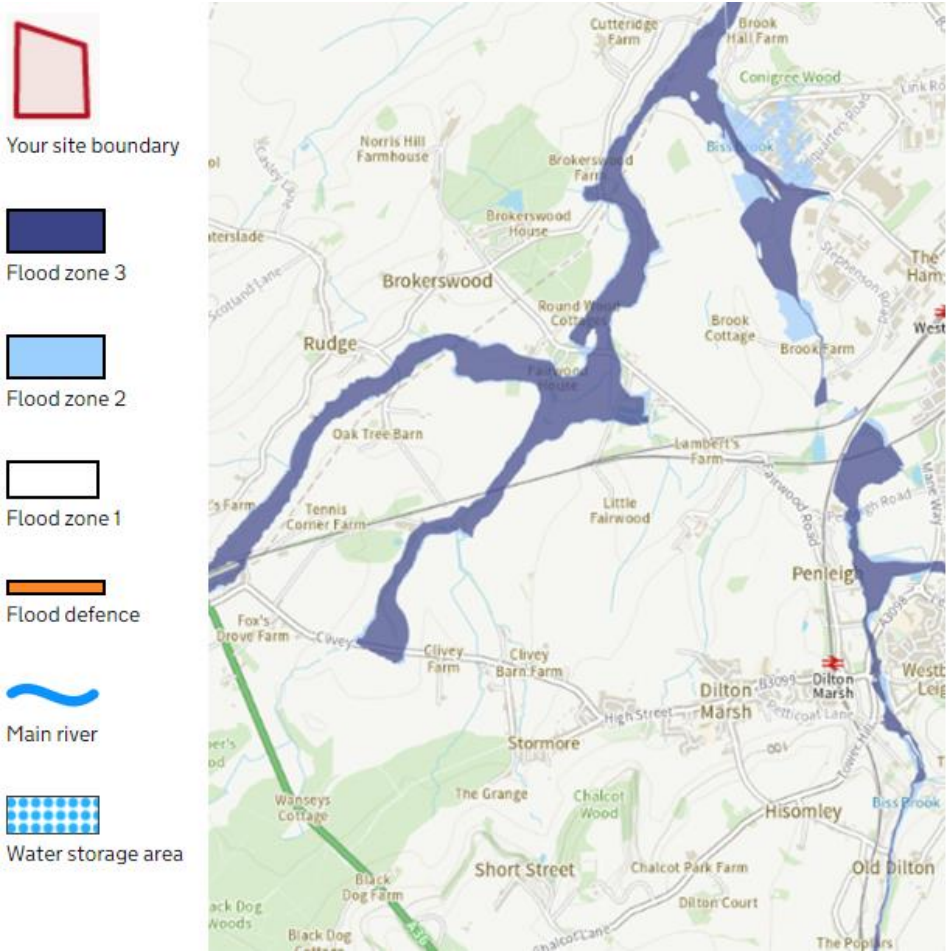
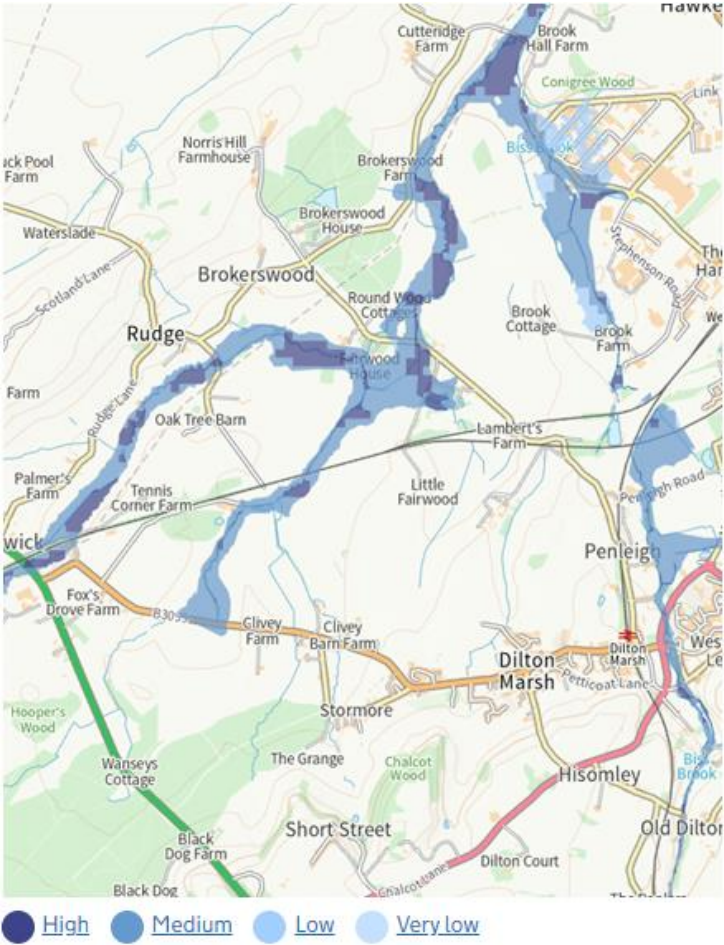


Figure 4-4: Surface water flood risk in the neighbourhood area



## Future Baseline

### *Impacts of Climate Change*

- 4.14 Research on the probable effects of climate change in the UK was released in 2018 by the UK Climate Projections (UKCP18) team. UKCP18 gives climate information for the UK up to the end of this century and projections of future changes to the climate are provided, based on simulations from climate models. Projections are broken down to a regional level across the UK and are shown in probabilistic form, which illustrate the potential range of changes and level of confidence in each prediction.
- 4.15 As highlighted by the research, the effects of climate change for the South East of England by 2040 in a 'medium emissions' scenario are likely to be as follows:<sup>16</sup>
- An increase in winter mean temperature of 1°C and an increase in summer mean temperature of 2°C; and
  - A change in winter mean precipitation up to +10% and summer mean precipitation up to -10%.
- 4.16 Resulting from these changes, a range of risks exist for the neighbourhood area, including:
- Effects on water resources, such as a reduction in availability of groundwater for extraction and a need to increase capacity of wastewater treatment plants and sewers;
  - Adverse effect on water quality from low stream levels and turbulent stream flow after heavy rain;
  - Increased risk of flooding and a need to upgrade flood defences;
  - Soil erosion due to flash flooding;
  - Loss of species that are at the edge of their southerly distribution and spread of species at the northern edge of their distribution;
  - Increased demand for air-conditioning; and
  - Heat stress related issues with infrastructure due to increased temperature.

### *Renewable Energy Uptake*

- 4.17 In line with UK trends and national commitments, emissions are likely to continue to fall as energy efficiency measures, renewable energy take-up and new technologies, such as EVs and solar PV, become more widely adopted.
- 4.18 With regard specifically to transport emissions, the uptake of Ultra Low Emission Vehicles (ULEVs) will contribute positively towards the reduction of road transport related emissions. In line with assumptions made by the Department for Transport's 'Road to Zero' Report (2018)<sup>17</sup>, it is assumed that ULEV uptake will increase rapidly in the coming decade and aside from Heavy

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<sup>16</sup> Met Office (2019) 'Climate change projections over land' can be accessed [here](#).

<sup>17</sup> HM Gov (2018) 'The Road to Zero – Next steps towards cleaner road transport and delivering our Industrial Strategy' can be accessed [here](#).



Goods Vehicles (HGVs), all vehicles could be ultra-low emission (powered either by hydrogen or electricity) by 2030.

- 4.19 In the future, new development could have the potential to increase flood risk through factors such as changing surface and ground water flows, overloading existing inputs to the drainage and wastewater networks or increasing the number of residents exposed to areas of existing flood risk. It is further recognised that climate change has the potential to increase the occurrence of extreme weather events. This has the potential to put residents, property, and development at a high risk of flood exposure. However, in line with the NPPF (2023) sequential testing is likely to ensure that development within areas at highest risk of flooding is largely avoided, and development is likely to deliver mitigation such as Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDS).

## Key Issues

- 4.20 Considering the policy context and baseline information, the following key issues (constraints and / or opportunities) are identified in relation to Climate Change (Including Flood Risk):

- Wiltshire Council declared a climate emergency in 2019 and is committed to making the authority area carbon neutral by 2030;
- The DMNP neighbourhood area is partially affected by areas at high risk of fluvial flooding (Flood Zone 3) and areas at varying risk of surface water flooding. These areas are broadly found in the north of the neighbourhood area, especially in areas where the River Biss and the neighbourhood area's border overlap. Development should ensure appropriate mitigation (e.g., SuDS) and seek opportunities to improve drainage and reduce flood risk where they exist;
- The transport sector continues to be a key challenge in terms of reducing emissions. The DMNP provides opportunities to guide development towards the most accessible available locations in the neighbourhood area and require local infrastructure (including walking and cycling) improvements where appropriate;
- The DMNP should seek to maximise opportunities for local renewable energy and electric vehicle infrastructure development, as well as new green infrastructure and improved ecological links, to support climate resilience; and
- Opportunities to enhance the resilience of the neighbourhood area and its residents to the effects of climate change should be sought out in the DMNP. This can include adaptation strategies, green infrastructure enhancement, flood betterment measures, infrastructure development, and increased renewable energy sources.

## SEA Objectives

- 4.21 Considering the key issues discussed above, it is proposed that the SEA should include the following objectives and assessment questions in relation to Climate Change (including Flood Risk):

**Table 4-2: Proposed SEA objectives for Climate Change (Including Flood Risk)**

SEA Objective	Assessment Questions (Will the Option / Proposal Help to...)
Reduce the contribution to climate change made by activities in the neighbourhood area.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reduce the number of journeys made by polluting vehicles?</li> <li>• Promote the use of sustainable modes of transport, including walking, cycling and public transport?</li> <li>• Improve or extend local footpaths, cycle paths or strategic green infrastructure routes?</li> <li>• Increase the number of new development meeting or exceeding sustainable design criteria?</li> <li>• Generate energy from low or zero carbon sources?</li> <li>• Reduce energy consumption from non-renewable resources?</li> <li>• Support the transition to electric vehicles?</li> </ul>
Support the resilience of the neighbourhood area to the potential effects of climate change, including flood risk.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Avoid inappropriate development in areas at risk of flooding, considering the likely future effects of climate change?</li> <li>• Improve and extend green infrastructure networks in the neighbourhood area?</li> <li>• Sustainably manage water runoff?</li> <li>• Increase the resilience of the local built and natural environment?</li> <li>• Ensure the potential risks associated with climate change are duly considered in the design of new development in the neighbourhood area?</li> </ul>

## 5. Community Wellbeing

- 5.1 This theme focuses on health indicators and deprivation, healthcare provision in the neighbourhood area and influences on resident health and wellbeing, including access to open space and the countryside.

### Policy Context

- 5.2 **Table 5-1** presents the most relevant documents identified in the policy review for the purposes of the SEA.

**Table 5-1: Plans, Policies and Strategies Reviewed in Relation to Community Wellbeing**

Document Title	Year of Publication
<b>National</b>	
<a href="#"><u>Levelling-up and Regeneration Act</u></a>	2023
<a href="#"><u>National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)</u></a>	2023
<a href="#"><u>Health Equity in England: The Marmot Review 10 Years On</u></a>	2020
<a href="#"><u>Planning Practice Guidance</u></a>	2019
<a href="#"><u>The 25 Year Environment Plan</u></a>	2018
<b>Local</b>	
<a href="#"><u>Dilton Marsh Neighbourhood Development Plan Local Green Space Topic Paper</u></a>	2023
<a href="#"><u>Wiltshire's Joint Health and Wellbeing Strategy</u></a>	2019
<a href="#"><u>Wiltshire Council - Wiltshire Core Strategy</u></a>	2015
<a href="#"><u>Wiltshire Council - Emerging Local Plan (Reg 19)</u></a>	(emerging; Reg 19 submitted in 2023)

- 5.3 The key messages emerging from the review are summarised below:

- The Government's Levelling Up and Regeneration Bill seeks to reduce regional inequalities and promote economic growth and opportunities in less prosperous areas. It has been designed to address regional disparities, stimulate economic development, and enhance infrastructure and community well-being in order to create a more balanced and inclusive nation;
- The DMNP will need to have regard for the principles set out in the NPPF, which seek to retain and enhance access to community services and facilities such as educational facilities and open spaces. The NPPF recognises the benefits of having a range of local provision to support community needs, in addition to the benefits of creating cohesive communities in safe environments where the fear of crime (and crime itself) does not undermine resident quality of life. This contributes to ensuring settlement and community identities are protected;



- As set out in the NPPF, it should be ensured that the design of streets, parking areas, other transport elements and the content of associated standards reflects current national guidance, including the National Design Guide and the National Model Design Code. The Design Guide and Model code illustrate how well-designed places that are beautiful, healthy, greener, enduring, and successful can be achieved in practice;
- The NPPF highlights the role of development plans in helping to deliver access to high quality open spaces and opportunities for sport and physical activity, therefore contributing to the health and wellbeing of communities. The health benefits of access to nature, green spaces and green infrastructure are further reiterated in the 25-year Environment Plan;
- The 2020 Health Equity in England Report identifies that the health gap between less and more deprived areas has grown in the last decade, where more people can expect to spend more of their lives in poor health, and where improvements to life expectancy have stalled, or even declined for the poorest 10% of women;
- The Planning for Sport Guidance seeks to help the planning system provide formal and informal opportunities for everyone to take part in sport and be physically active. The Guidance outlines 12 'planning-for-sport' principles;
- Wiltshire's Joint Health and Wellbeing Strategy is a shared strategy which aims to improve the health and wellbeing of the local population, reduce inequalities, and promote the integration of services. The strategy has been developed based upon the evidence of need identified within The Wiltshire Health and Wellbeing Joint Strategic Needs Assessment (JSNA) which provides a summary of the current and future health and wellbeing needs of the people in Wiltshire;
- Dilton Marsh Neighbourhood Development Plan Local Green Space Topic Paper outlines how candidate sites for designated Local Green Spaces within Dilton Marsh have been identified and assessed, in support of the emerging DMNP;
- The DMNP will also need to consider the relevant policies that are outlined in the WCS. Examples of relevant policies include:
  - Core Policy 38: Retail and Leisure;
  - Core Policy 43: Providing Affordable Homes; and
  - Core Policy 52: Green Infrastructure.
- Due regard should also be given to policies within the emerging Wiltshire Local Plan Review, which works to enhance community wellbeing by enhancing blue/green infrastructure and biodiversity, and promoting sustainable transport, active travel and improving air quality. Examples of relevant policies include:
  - Policy 67: Sequential test and retail impact assessment;
  - Policy 76: Providing Affordable Homes; and
  - Policy 93: Green and Blue Infrastructure.

## Baseline Summary

### Current Baseline

#### *Population*

- 5.4 As of the 2021 Census, the population of Dilton Marsh was 1,958 – an increase from 1,934 in 2011.<sup>18</sup> While this is a relatively modest increase (+1%), it is recognised that an increasing population has the potential to impact upon the vitality of the local community and community infrastructure.

#### *Index of Multiple Deprivation*

- 5.5 The Index of Multiple Deprivation 2019 (IMD) is an overall relative measure of deprivation and is the combination of seven different domains as described below:
- **Income:** the proportion of the population experiencing a deprivation relating to low income. There are a further two subsets of this measure:
    - **Income deprivation affecting children:** the proportion of children aged 0-15 living in income deprived families; and
    - **Income deprivation affecting older people:** the proportion of all adults aged 60 and above that experience income deprivation.
  - **Employment:** the proportion of the working-age population involuntarily excluded from the labour market, including those who want to work but cannot;
  - **Education, skills, and training:** the lack of attainment and skills in the population;
  - **Health deprivation and disability:** the risk of premature death and the impairment of quality of life through poor physical or mental health;
  - **Crime:** the risk of personal and material victimisation at the local level.
  - **Barriers to housing and services:** the physical and financial accessibility of housing and local services, split into 'geographical barriers' linked to physical proximity and 'wider barriers' linked to access to housing; and
  - **Living environment:** the quality of the local environment, categorised into 'indoors living environment' to measure the quality of housing and 'outdoors living environment' to measure indicators like air quality and road traffic accidents.
- 5.6 Lower super output areas (LSOAs)<sup>19</sup> are designed to improve the reporting of small area statistics in England and Wales. They are standardised geographies intended to be as consistent as possible, with each LSOA containing approximately 1,000 to 1,500 people. In relation to the IMD 2019, LSOAs are ranked out of the 32,844 in England and Wales, with 1 being the most deprived.
- 5.7 In this respect, the neighbourhood area overlaps with two LSOAs. **Table 5-2** below indicates which deprivation domain is more prevalent across the LSOAs overlapping the neighbourhood area. Reflecting on this information reveals that

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<sup>18</sup> City Population (2022) 'Dilton Marsh' can be accessed [here](#).

<sup>19</sup> The Indices of Deprivation Explorer can be accessed [here](#).

the entire neighbourhood area suffers from deprivation issues related to 'Barriers to Housing and Services' and 'Living Environment Deprivation Domain'. It is also notable that LSOA Wiltshire 020B is significantly more deprived than LSOA Wiltshire 039A, finding itself inside the 50% most deprived LSOAs for six IMD indicators.

**Table 5-2: IMD Rankings for the Neighbourhood Area**

LSOA	Most Deprived Indices
Wiltshire 039A	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Barriers to Housing and Services – 15,731 (amongst 50% most deprived neighbourhoods)</li> <li>Living Environment Deprivation Domain – 16,109 (amongst 50% most deprived neighbourhoods)</li> </ul>
Wiltshire 020B	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Overall IMD Rank – 13,890 (amongst 50% most deprived neighbourhoods)</li> <li>Income Deprivation Domain – 13,480 (amongst 50% most deprived neighbourhoods)</li> <li>Employment Deprivation Domain – 12,913 (amongst 40% most deprived neighbourhoods)</li> <li>Education, Skills and Training Domain – 10,175 (amongst 40% most deprived neighbourhoods)</li> <li>Barriers to Housing and Services – 6,855 (amongst 30% most deprived neighbourhoods)</li> <li>Living Environment Deprivation Domain – 10,001 (amongst 40% most deprived neighbourhoods)</li> </ul>

### *Housing*

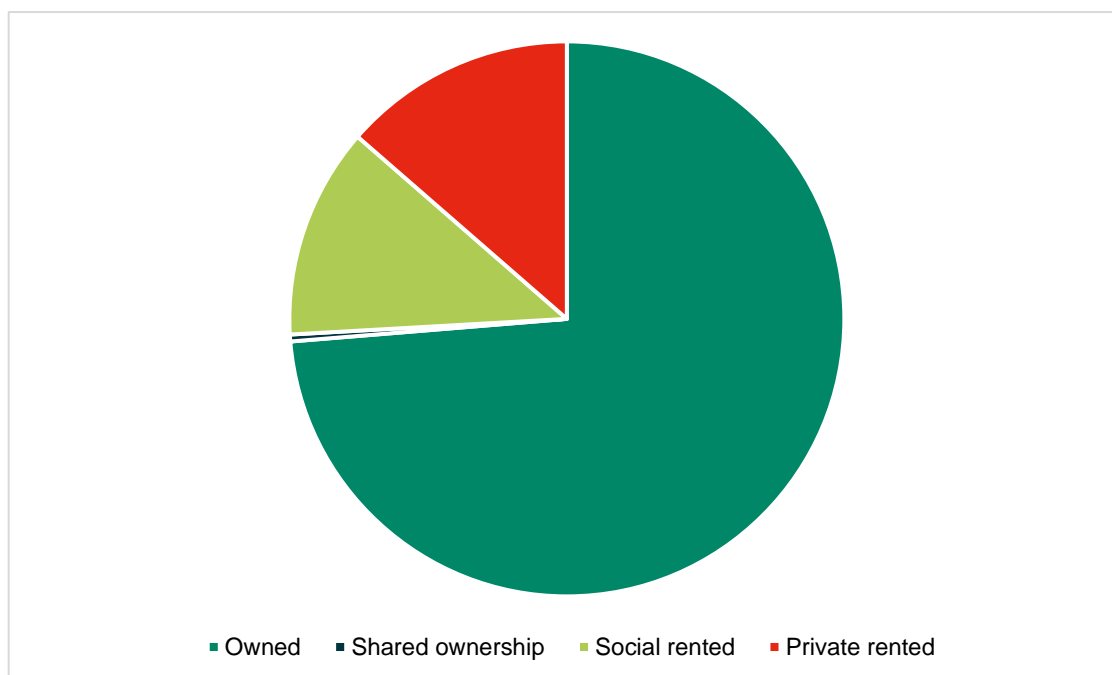
- 5.8 As reported by Zoopla,<sup>20</sup> the average house price over the past 12 months in Wiltshire is £348,867 – with detached houses selling for an average of £518,933, semi-detached houses selling for an average of £319,350, terraced houses selling for an average of £261,685, and flats selling for an average of £170,747.
- 5.9 According to Rightmove,<sup>21</sup> the average house price in Dilton Marsh over the past 12 months was £370,103. The majority of sales around Dilton Marsh during the last year were detached properties, selling for an average price of £451,785. Semi-detached and terraced and properties sold for an average of £434,999 and £245,463, respectively. This suggests that the neighbourhood area has similar average house prices in comparison to the regional trends for most housing types.
- 5.10 **Figure 5-1** below indicates housing tenure in the neighbourhood area. In the 2021 Census,<sup>22</sup> 73.7% of the neighbourhood area's households owned their property outright or with a mortgage/loan, with an additional 0.4% under shared ownership. Private rent and social rent accounted for 13.6% and 12.3% of the area's tenure mix, respectively.

<sup>20</sup> Zoopla (2023) 'House prices in Wiltshire' can be accessed [here](#).

<sup>21</sup> Rightmove (2022) 'House Prices in Dilton Marsh' can be accessed [here](#).

<sup>22</sup> ONS (2021) 'TS054 – Tenure' can be accessed [here](#).

**Figure 5-1: Tenure by Household Composition for the Neighbourhood Area (Based on 2021 Census Data)**



### *Community Assets and Infrastructure*

5.11 DMNP have provided an overview of the services and facilities within the neighbourhood area. They are as follows:

- Four churches: Holy Trinity on the High Street; Stormore Baptist at Stormore Road; Penknapp Providence Chapel on Tower Hill; and St. Mary's Church in Old Dilton (only open for special seasonal services);
- Two community venues: The Memorial Hall built 1921 and the Social Club. These support the Women's Institute, knitting group, gardening club, pantomime, darts, skittles, billiards, yoga, zumba, table tennis, cultural events, concerts, handicraft show, village history society and many others;
- Post Office at Fairfield Farm College;
- One public house 'The Weavers' that was purchased by Fairfield Farm College in April 2021 and designated as an Asset of Community Value;
- Step Up Pre-School: a 48 place pre-school for 18-month to 5 year olds situated within the grounds of the Primary School;
- Dilton Marsh Church of England Primary School: a 1-form entry school for 4 to 11 year olds with 210 places and 185 pupils at the last school roll census; and
- Other services available at Dilton Motors and Dilton Fish and Chips.

5.12 NPSG note that, until recently, Fairfield Farm College provided a number of community facilities. A community shop and café, as well as multi-use-games-area (MUGA) and rooms available for hire, were all located within the College; however, since July 2023, the shop and café have closed, and the College no longer hire out the MUGA or rooms. Additionally, the College currently contains the neighbourhood area's only post office, which operates on limited hours; however, this will be permanently closed by December 2023.

5.13 Given the proximity of the neighbourhood area to Westbury, residents are also likely to travel to neighbouring locations to access a greater variety of services, facilities, and amenities.

### *Green Infrastructure Networks*

5.14 Access to gardens, parks, woodlands, and rivers have played a huge part in helping people through the COVID-19 pandemic. Almost nine in ten adults surveyed by Natural England reported that being in nature makes them feel happy, and nearly three quarters of adults were concerned about biodiversity loss in England.<sup>23</sup>

5.15 As the neighbourhood area is predominantly rural, there is a good supply of local woodland and rivers, many of which can be accessed by the extensive local public footpath network.

5.16 Recreational/sports facilities within the neighbourhood area are present in the form of a recreation ground, a multi-use games area at Fairfield College, and two fishing sites.

5.17 The Local Green Space Topic Paper<sup>24</sup> recommends a total of eight areas for designation as Local Green Spaces in the emerging neighbourhood plan. These are:

- LGS1: Dilton Marsh Playing Fields and The Firs, Alan Powell Lane;
- LGS2: Lansdowne Close;
- LGS3: Chalcot Park (part);
- LGS4: Fairwood Road Green;
- LGS5: Stormore Green;
- LGS6: Grassy bank on northern side of High Street, opposite Stormore Green;
- LGS7: Shepherds Mead Green; and
- LGS8: Clay Close Green.

### **Future Baseline**

5.18 As the population of the neighbourhood area increases through development brought forward by the DMNP, it is likely there will be an increase in pressure on the limited existing services within the neighbourhood area, and those outside of it. This highlights the need to support the retention of existing community facilities in the area and seek new services/ infrastructure where possible. This is more likely to be appropriately considered and addressed through planned development rather than unplanned development.

5.19 The suitability and affordability of housing for local requirements depends on the implementation of appropriate housing policies throughout the neighbourhood area. Unplanned development may have wider implications in terms of transport and access to infrastructure, or the natural environment.

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<sup>23</sup> Natural England (2020) People and Nature survey can be accessed [here](#).

<sup>24</sup> Dilton Marsh Neighbourhood Plan (2023) 'Dilton Marsh Neighbourhood Development Plan Local Green Space Topic Paper' can be accessed [here](#).

- 5.20 The COVID-19 pandemic has also changed the way people work and shop. For many people, working from home is likely to continue to form part of a more flexible approach. Access to green space is therefore likely to be increasingly important, playing a key role in day to day life (being active, relaxing or even commuting). The potential impacts associated with increased levels of home working is also considered within the 'Transportation' SEA theme in **Chapter 9** of this SEA Scoping Report.

## Key Issues

- 5.21 Considering the policy context and baseline information, the following key issues (constraints and / or opportunities) are identified in relation to Community Wellbeing:
- The DMNP provides the opportunity for enhanced policy provisions which seek to deliver the right mix of housing types, tenures and sizes according to local needs, in suitably connected places; and reduce deprivation in this respect;
  - The neighbourhood area is limited in terms of community infrastructure, services and facilities – the DMNP provides an opportunity to encourage the delivery of new provision in the area; and
  - The DMNP provides the opportunities to plan for development which accommodates for changing working patterns and lifestyles, and places greater emphasis on high levels of accessibility.

## SEA Objective

- 5.22 Considering the key issues discussed above, it is proposed that the SEA should include the following objective and assessment questions in relation to Community Wellbeing:

**Table 5-3: Proposed SEA Objective for Community Wellbeing**

SEA Objective	Assessment Questions (Will the Option / Proposal Help to...)
Ensure growth in the neighbourhood area is aligned with the needs of all residents and in suitably connected places, supported by the appropriate and timely provision of infrastructure to enable cohesive and inclusive communities.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provide everyone with the opportunity to live in good quality and affordable housing?</li> <li>• Support the provision of a range of house types and sizes targeted at aligning the housing stock with local needs?</li> <li>• Provide flexible and adaptable homes that meet people's changing needs?</li> <li>• Improve the availability and/ or accessibility of local services and facilities?</li> <li>• Encourage and promote social cohesion and active involvement of local people in community activities?</li> <li>• Contribute to improving aspects of deprivation in the neighbourhood area?</li> <li>• Maintain or enhance the quality of life of existing and future residents?</li> </ul>



## 6. Historic Environment

- 6.1 This theme focuses on designated and non-designated heritage assets and features (including archaeology) and their setting.

### Policy context

- 6.2 **Table 6-1** presents the most relevant documents identified in the policy review for the purposes of the SEA.

**Table 6-1: Plans, Policies and Strategies Reviewed in Relation to Historic Environment**

Document Title	Year of Publication
<b>National</b>	
<a href="#">National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)</a>	2023
<a href="#">Historic England: Heritage and Climate Change</a>	2022
<a href="#">Historic England Advice Note 11: Neighbourhood Planning and the Historic Environment</a>	2022
<a href="#">Historic England Advice Note 4: Tall Buildings Advice Note</a>	2022
<a href="#">The National Design Guide</a>	2019
<a href="#">Historic England Advice Note 1: Conservation Area Appraisal, Designation and Management</a>	2019
<a href="#">The 25 Year Environment Plan</a>	2018
<a href="#">Historic England Good Practice Advice: The Setting of Heritage Assets</a>	2017
<a href="#">Historic England Advice Note 8: Sustainability Appraisal (SA) and Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA)</a>	2016
<a href="#">Historic England Advice Note 3: The Historic Environment and Site Allocations in Local Plans</a>	2015
<b>Local</b>	
<a href="#">Wiltshire Council - Wiltshire Core Strategy</a>	2015
<a href="#">Wiltshire Council - Emerging Local Plan (Reg 19)</a>	(emerging; Reg 19 submitted in 2023)

- 6.3 The key messages emerging from the review are summarised below:

- The key high-level principles for the conservation and enhancement of the historic environment are as follows:
  - The historic environment is a shared resource;
  - Everyone should be able to participate in sustaining the historic environment;



- Understanding the significance of places is vital;
- Significant places should be managed to sustain their values;
- Decisions about change must be reasonable, transparent, and consistent; and
- Documenting and learning from decisions is essential.<sup>25</sup>
- The significance of places is the key element which underpins the conservation and enhancement of the historic environment. Significance is a collective term for the sum of all the heritage values attached to a place, be it a building an archaeological site or a larger historic area such as a whole village or landscape;
- The DMNP will be required to be in general conformity with the NPPF, which ultimately encourages the conservation and enhancement of historic environment assets in a manner appropriate to their significance. The NPPF seeks planning policies and decisions which are sympathetic to local character and history without preventing or discouraging appropriate innovation of change. The NPPF supports the use of area-based character assessments, design guides and codes and masterplans to help ensure that land is used efficiently while also creating beautiful and sustainable places;
- As set out in the NPPF, it should be ensured that the design of streets, parking areas, other transport elements and the content of associated standards reflects current national guidance, including the National Design Guide and the National Model Design Code. Design Codes can set out a necessary level of detail in sensitive locations, for example, with heritage considerations, and they can set out ways to maintain local character;
- Planning Practice Guidance expands on the NPPF recognising the proactive rather than passive nature of conservation;
- The role of the historic environment, as part of healthy and thriving ecosystems, landscapes and cultural values, including settlement identity, is reiterated through the key messages of the 25 Year Environment Plan and National Design Guide;
- Historic England's Advice Notes, Good Practice Advice, and Climate Change strategy provide further guidance in relation to the conservation and enhancement of the historic environment. Of particular relevance for the DMNP is the emphasis on the importance of:
  - Understanding the different types of special architectural and historic interest which underpin designations, as well as how settings and/ or views contribute to the significance of heritage assets;
  - Advising on mitigating, managing risks, and adapting to challenges posed by climate change;
  - Recognising the value of implementing controls through neighbourhood plans, conservation area appraisals and management plans; and
  - Appropriate evidence gathering, including clearly identifying those issues that threaten an area or assets character or appearance and that merit the introduction of management measures.

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<sup>25</sup> Historic England: Conservation Principles, Policies and Guidance

- The DMNP will also need to consider the relevant policies that are outlined in the WCS, such as Core Policy 58: Ensuring the Conservation of the Historic Environment;
- Due regard should also be given to policies within the emerging Wiltshire Local Plan Review, which works to safeguard the historic environment by delivering sustainable development and construction methods in the built environment. The key policy to consider is Policy 99: Ensuring the Conservation and Enhancement of the Historic Environment; and
- In addition to conserving the historic environment, the DMNP should seek to identify opportunities to enhance the fabric and setting of the historic environment. It should also seek to rejuvenate features and areas which are at risk of neglect and decay.

## Baseline Summary

### Current Baseline

- 6.4 The DMNP holds rich historic values, some of which, such as historic landscape values, are demonstrated in other scoping themes. Designated historic environment features are shown in **Figure 6-1**.
- 6.5 Listed buildings are nationally designated heritage assets that are protected through the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990.<sup>26</sup> To assess the historic environment, the National Heritage List for England, provided by Historic England,<sup>27</sup> has been utilised. There are a total of 28 listed buildings in the neighbourhood area: 25 Grade II, two Grade II\* (Chalcot House, HE List Entry Number [1021468](#); Church of Holy Trinity, HE List Entry Number [1021473](#)), and one Grade I (Church of St Mary, HE List Entry Number [1021476](#)).
- 6.6 In England, Scheduled Monuments are nationally important archaeological sites or historical building designated and protected by Historic England under the Ancient Monuments and Archaeological Areas Act 1979.<sup>28</sup> There is one Scheduled Monument in the neighbourhood area: '*Medieval settlement and associated field systems west of Brook Farm*' (HE List Entry Number [1019386](#)).
- 6.7 None of the identified designated assets are known to be at risk<sup>29</sup> of being lost due to neglect, decay, or inappropriate development. However, it is important to recognise that Heritage at Risk registers for areas outside of London do not contain information about the status of Grade II listed buildings. As such, it is currently not possible to determine whether any of the Grade II listed buildings within the neighbourhood area are at risk.
- 6.8 There are no Conservation Areas or Registered Parks and Gardens within Dilton Marsh.

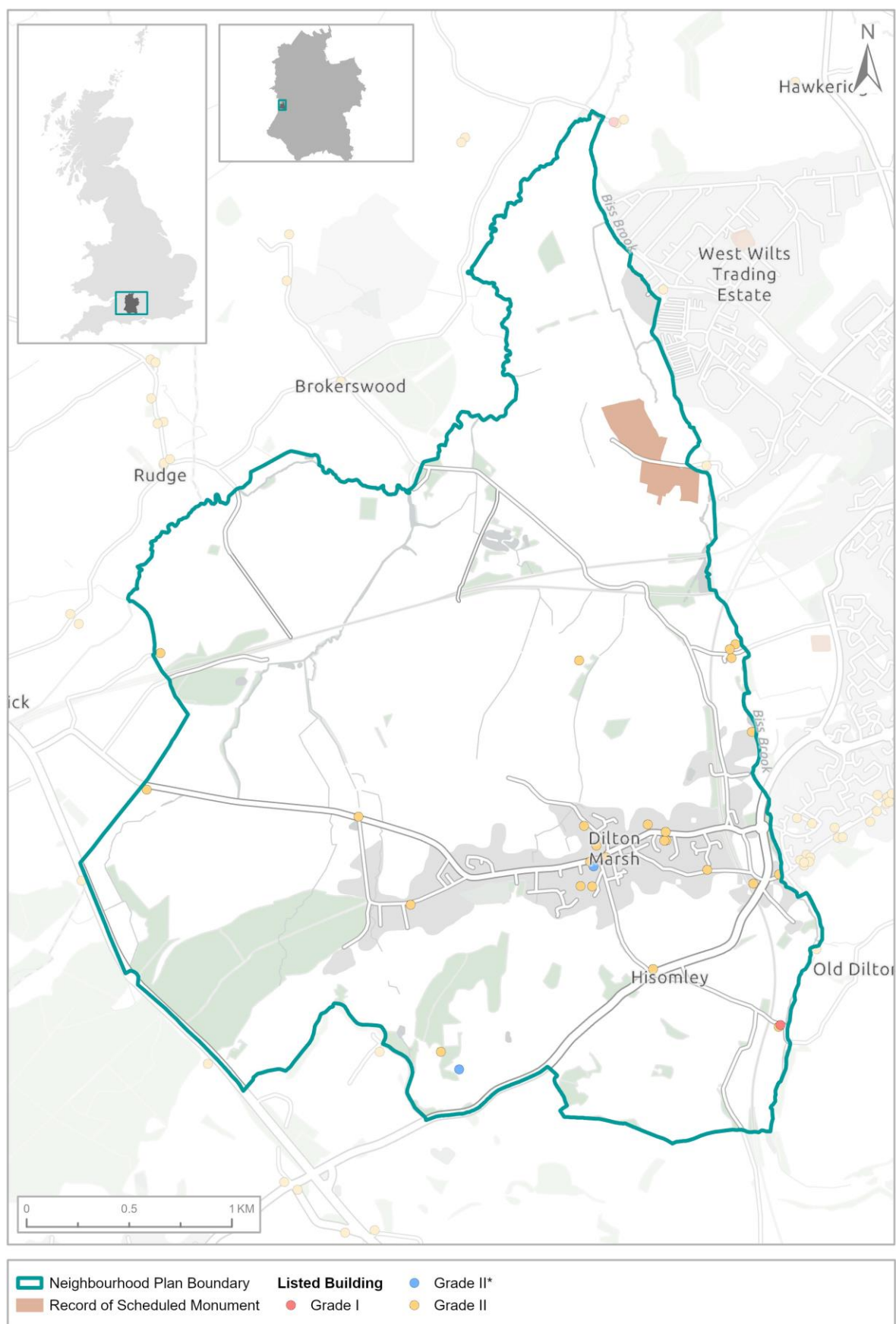
<sup>26</sup> UK Government (1990) 'Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act' can be accessed [here](#).

<sup>27</sup> Historic England (no date) 'National Heritage List for England – Search the List – Advanced Search' can be accessed [here](#). Select which heritage categories you'd like to view and enter 'Wiltshire' into the 'District/Unitary Authority/Borough' box and then 'Dilton Marsh' into the 'Parish (Civil / Non-civil)' box in turn and press the search button at the bottom of the page.

<sup>28</sup> Ancient Monuments and Archaeological Areas Act (1979) can be accessed [here](#).

<sup>29</sup> Historic England (2023) 'Heritage at Risk 2023 Registers' can be accessed [here](#).

**Figure 6-1: Historic Environment Assets in the Neighbourhood Area**



**AECOM**

### *Locally Important Heritage Features*

- 6.9 It is noted that not all of the neighbourhood area's historic environment features are subject to statutory designations and non-designated features contribute a large part of what people interact with on a day-to-day basis. Although not designated, many buildings and areas are of historic interest and are important to local communities.
- 6.10 The Wiltshire and Swindon Historic Environment Record (HER) identifies important and distinctive structures or features that positively contribute to the local sense of place and distinctiveness of the county. Following a high-level review of the HER via the Heritage Gateway<sup>30</sup>, there are 76 documented local records within the neighbourhood area. During the subsequent stages of the SEA process, the Wiltshire and Swindon HER shall be explored in further detail to consider the potential impacts associated with the plan proposals on these assets.

### **Future Baseline**

- 6.11 Whilst designated and non-designated assets will continue to be afforded protection under the provisions of the NPPF and WCS, it is recognised that future development has the potential to negatively affect historic character and settings, detract from historic settlement qualities and disrupt valued viewpoints; being susceptible to insensitive design and layout in new development.
- 6.12 Planning for future growth through the DMNP will support the minimisation of impacts. It can also seek opportunities for public realm improvements, and accessibility improvements which can indirectly benefit access to and enjoyment of the historic environment.

### **Key issues**

- 6.13 Considering the policy context and baseline information, the following key issues (constraints and / or opportunities) are identified in relation to Historic Environment:
- With a variety of designated assets and archaeological finds in the neighbourhood area, it will be important to ensure that future development avoids / minimises impacts upon the historic environment and maximises opportunities to improve the public realm and green infrastructure to the indirect benefit of heritage settings.

### **SEA objective**

- 6.14 Considering the key issues discussed above, it is proposed that the SEA should include the following objective and assessment questions in relation to Historic Environment:

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<sup>30</sup> Heritage Gateway (2021) 'More Detailed Search' can be accessed [here](#). Open the link, change the tab from 'map' to 'admin location', type 'Dilton Marsh' into the administrative location search bar and press the search button at the bottom of the page.

**Table 6-2: Proposed SEA objective for Historic Environment**

SEA objective	Assessment questions (will the option/ proposal help to...)
Protect, conserve and enhance the historic environment within and surrounding the neighbourhood area.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Conserve and enhance buildings and structures of architectural or historic interest, both designated and non-designated, and their settings?</li> <li>• Conserve and enhance the special interest, character and appearance of locally important features and their settings?</li> <li>• Protect the integrity of the historic setting of key monuments of cultural heritage interest as listed in the Wiltshire and Swindon HER?</li> <li>• Support the undertaking of early archaeological investigations and, where appropriate, recommend mitigation strategies?</li> <li>• Support access to, interpretation and understanding of the historic evolution and character of the neighbourhood area?</li> </ul>

## 7. Landscape

- 7.1 This theme focuses on designated and protected landscapes within or near to the neighbourhood area, as well as landscape and villagescape character, landscape quality and visual amenity.

### Policy context

- 7.2 **Table 7-1** presents the most relevant documents identified in the policy review for the purposes of the SEA.

**Table 7-1: Plans, Policies and Strategies Reviewed in Relation to Landscape**

Document title	Year of publication
<b>National</b>	
<a href="#"><u>National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)</u></a>	2023
<a href="#"><u>National Model Design Code</u></a>	2021
<a href="#"><u>The National Design Guide</u></a>	2019
<a href="#"><u>A Green Future: Our 25 Year Plan to Improve the Environment</u></a>	2018
<b>Local</b>	
<a href="#"><u>Wiltshire Council Renewable Energy Study</u></a>	2023
<a href="#"><u>Wiltshire Council - Wiltshire Core Strategy</u></a>	2015
<a href="#"><u>Wiltshire Council - Emerging Local Plan (Reg 19)</u></a>	(emerging; Reg 19 submitted in 2023)
<a href="#"><u>West Wiltshire Landscape Character Assessment</u></a>	2006

- 7.3 The key messages emerging from the review are summarised below:
- The DMNP will be required to be in general conformity with the NPPF which gives great weight to conserving and enhancing protected landscapes, as well as landscape character and scenic beauty. The NPPF recognises the role of green infrastructure in landscape settings, as well as the importance of designated biodiversity sites, habitats, woodland, historic features, agricultural land and cultural landscapes. The positive contribution that land remediation can make in terms of addressing despoiled, degraded, derelict, contaminated and unstable land is also recognised;
  - The 25-year Environment Plan and National Design Guide complement each other with their aims for a cleaner, greener country which puts the environment first and celebrates the variety of natural landscapes and habitats. Design is focused on beautiful, enduring and successful places, which respond to local character and provide a network of high quality green open spaces;
  - The National Model Design Code states that all design codes should include a landscape and open space strategy that incorporates the existing natural



features and new structural elements. It recognises that landscapes can be major drivers in the design process;

- Wiltshire Council Renewable Energy Study offers a Landscape Sensitivity Assessment for wind energy and solar photovoltaic (PV) schemes, which will be used to inform judgements on the landscape sensitivity of different parts of Wiltshire to these forms of development. The findings be used by the Council to identify broad areas for renewable energy development and establish a local policy framework for such development, in line with the NPPF.
- The DMNP will also need to consider the relevant policies that are outlined in the WCS. Examples of relevant policies include:
  - Core Policy 51: Landscape.
  - Core Policy 57: Ensuring High Quality Design and Place Shaping; and
  - Core Policy 52: Green Infrastructure.
- Due regard should also be given to policies within the emerging Wiltshire Local Plan Review, which works to which works to safeguard and enhance the landscape through enhancing blue and green infrastructure and biodiversity. Examples of relevant policies include:
  - Policy 91: Conserving and Enhancing Wiltshire's Landscapes;
  - Policy 93: Green and Blue Infrastructure; and
  - Policy 98: Ensuring High Quality Design and Place Shaping.
- The West Wiltshire LCA serves as a baseline of environmental information to enable a better understanding of West Wiltshire's landscapes.

## Baseline Summary

### Current Baseline

#### *Nationally Protected Landscapes*

- 7.4 There are no nationally protected landscapes within the neighbourhood area. However, there are Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) within 10 km: Cranborne Chase & West Wiltshire Downs AONB, approximately 3 km south; and Cotswolds AONB, approximately 7.5 km north-west.

#### *National Character Areas*

- 7.5 Dilton Marsh sits entirely within the '117- Avon Vales (NE522)' National Character Area (NCA).
- 7.6 The Avon Vales NCA<sup>31</sup> is '*...an undulating, low-lying landscape of mixed, predominantly pastoral agriculture and small limestone-built towns, cut by the (Bristol) River Avon and its tributaries, and surrounded to the west, south and east by higher land. Woodlands lie on the steeper slopes and by watercourses, and in a few other areas within a structured farmland of medium to large fields and now straggly hedgerows. It is more than 80 per cent agricultural (both arable and pasture, with some localised nurseries and market gardening) and*

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<sup>31</sup> Natural England (2014) 'NCA Profile:117 Avon Vales (NE522)' can be accessed [here](#).



*less than 10 per cent urban, but from the late 20th century onwards it has been subject to much development’.*

#### 7.7 Opportunities for this NCA include:

- Protect, manage and enhance the semi-natural habitats, including the pastoral waterside landscape of permanent pasture and wet grassland, calcareous and neutral grasslands, and (as site appropriate) ponds, and investigate and pursue opportunities to create such habitats, to increase resilience to climate change, reduce soil erosion and provide benefits to the water environment and biodiversity in general;
- Protect, manage and enhance the area’s woodlands and parklands for their rich ecological, historical and archaeological resource, to foster a sense of place and to provide benefits to wildlife, and work to establish appropriate access, thus enhancing cultural, health and recreational benefits for local residents;
- Plan for the creation of new landscapes associated with the expansion of towns such as Chippenham, Melksham and Trowbridge, while incorporating the existing landscape features into green infrastructure planning. This will serve the interests of local landscape character, access and recreation, biomass provision, biodiversity and water flow regulation; and
- Protect and manage the varied rural landscape of small urban areas amid gently rolling arable and pasture, and thick hedges interspersed with small woods, securing wide-ranging views, reinforcing landscape character, preventing soil erosion, promoting sense of place and tranquillity, and providing recreational benefits.

#### 7.8 The ecosystem services provided by the NCAs should be protected, including food provision, water availability, regulating soil erosion, regulating soil quality, regulating water quality, sense of place / inspiration, sense of history, recreation, biodiversity, and geodiversity.

#### *Local Landscape and Villagescape Character*

#### 7.9 The South Wiltshire Landscape Character Assessment<sup>32</sup> identifies that Dilton Marsh lies within the following Landscape Character Areas (LCAs):

- E3: North Bradley Rolling Clay, an *‘area of gently rolling clay lowland is covered by predominantly farmland with a mixture of pasture and arable’*. Key characteristics in this area include:
  - Gently rolling farmland based on clay, with extensive views, including views on the chalk downland in the east and south;
  - Distinct pattern of small to medium sized fields enclosed by mainly intact hedgerows with mature trees;
  - Predominantly pasture with a few scattered ancient woodland blocks;
  - Settlements consist of several villages and farmsteads linked by a dense network of mainly secondary roads and footpaths; and
  - Pylons as a dominant vertical element.

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<sup>32</sup> West Wiltshire District Council (2006) ‘West Wiltshire District Landscape Character Assessment’ can be accessed [here](#).

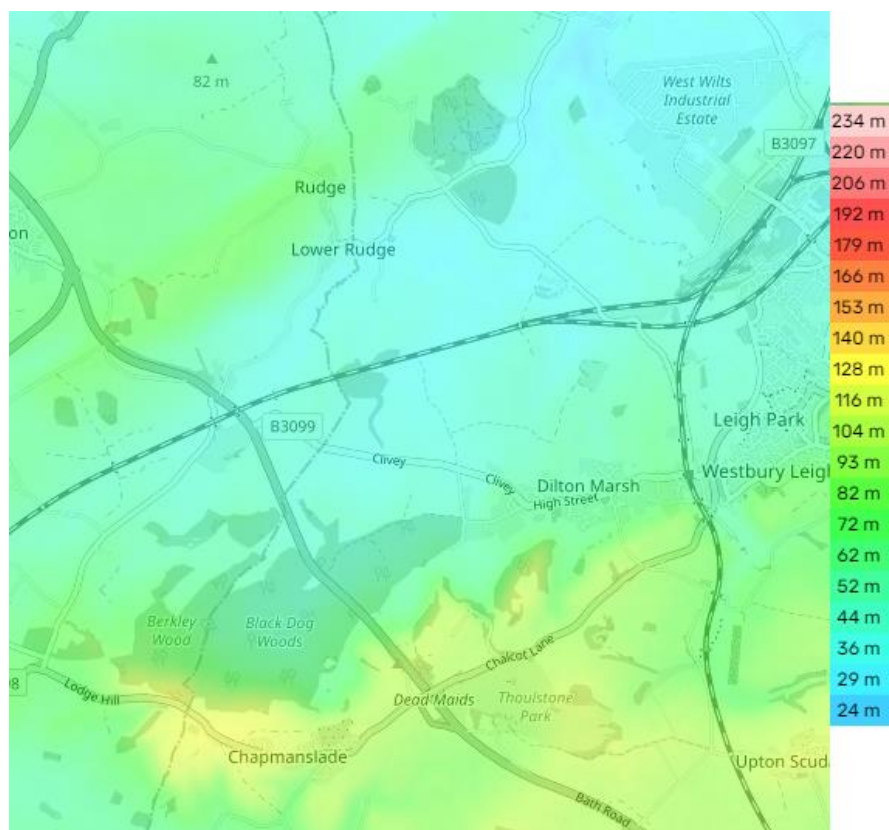
- E8: Haywood Rolling Clay Lowland, an area '*underlain by predominantly clay geology, the gently rolling topography of the area slopes gradually downwards, moving southwards towards Westbury*'. Key characteristics in this area include:
  - Gently rolling topography of the area slopes gradually downwards, moving southwards towards Westbury;
  - Human influence strongly visible in the form of West Wiltshire Trading Estate and junction of two main railway corridors;
  - Rural character disturbed by noise and visual intrusion associated with the railway corridors and West Wiltshire Trading Estate;
  - Combination of small, medium and large, farmed fields surround the trading estate, the boundaries of which are delineated by hedgerows in varying condition;
  - A series of interconnecting minor roads cross the area; and
  - Generally, sense of tranquillity throughout the area is disturbed by the presence of the railway corridor and Trading Estate.
- F3: Chapmanslade Greensand Hills, an area '*...of farmland, farmsteads and parkland is dominated by ancient woodland*'. Key characteristics in this area include:
  - Hilly wooded farmland with parkland;
  - Settlement pattern consists of the low lying village of Dilton Marsh and the village of Chapmanslade on top of a hill, few scattered farms and an estate – Chalcot House;
  - Distinct pattern of small sized mainly regular shaped fields enclosed by mostly intact hedgerows with mature trees; and
  - Strong sense of tranquillity and enclosure.

7.10 NPSG are seeking to designate local Key Views in the emerging DMNP. Evidence is being prepared to support the justification of these designations. Once finalised, this evidence will be a useful source of reference during the next stages of the SEA process.

### *Topography*

7.11 In terms of the topography of the neighbourhood area, it is recognised there is a broad incline to the south (see **Figure 7-1**); therefore, any future growth within the southern area of the neighbourhood area is likely to be relatively elevated in the landscape in comparison to the surrounding areas.

**Figure 7-1: Topography of Dilton Marsh<sup>33</sup>**



### *Visual Amenity*

7.12 It is useful to note that views of and across the neighbourhood area are also an important factor to consider in the planning process, as the scale, height, and mass of development can ultimately impact on important views. Changes like development and landscape change can see these important views and vistas degraded overtime.

### **Future Baseline**

7.13 New development has the potential to lead to incremental changes in landscape quality within and surrounding the neighbourhood area. This could place increased pressure on the surrounding countryside and local settings. Development also has the potential to disrupt views to and from the neighbourhood area. Whilst the level of growth proposed in the DMNP is relatively low, the neighbourhood area itself is rural, so growth still has the potential to significantly change the local landscape character. Growth to the east of the village, for example, may reduce the green gap (albeit minor) between Westbury and Dilton Marsh, resulting in an erosion of settlement character and distinctiveness. Growth to the north or south may significantly extend the settlement, in contrast to the relatively linear pattern of development along the B3099.

7.14 Coordinated delivery of green infrastructure, recreational spaces, and any regeneration opportunities could support landscape enhancements. The DMNP therefore presents an opportunity to plan for development in a way

<sup>33</sup> Topographic-map.com (2023). Available [here](https://www.topographic-map.com/).

which minimises landscape impacts and maximises improvement/ enhancement to the landscape resource where possible.

## Key Issues

7.15 Considering the policy context and baseline information, the following key issues (constraints and / or opportunities) are identified in relation to Landscape:

- Given its proximity to several bigger settlements, Dilton Marsh is positioned to allow residents access to larger towns as well as supporting access to the rural countryside surrounding the village. The neighbourhood area's unique character in this respect will be important to retain alongside future development. It will also be important to take into consideration the key characteristics and features supporting local landscape designations present, and enhance these where possible to increase access to and understanding of the natural environment;
- The southern region of Dilton Marsh is set in an area of rising topography. As such, views could be adversely impacted by new development depending on its location, detailed design and layout. It is however recognised that the Policy directions of the DMNP can seek to ensure any adverse effects in this respect are avoided/ mitigated where possible;
- The growth strategy for the DMNP should seek to minimise impacts on the wider landscape, including through avoidance / protection of key landscape features, such as valued trees and hedgerows; and
- The interplay between the existing built environment and open countryside is an important consideration for plan making.

## SEA Objective

7.16 Considering the key issues discussed above, it is proposed that the SEA should include the following objective and assessment questions in relation to Landscape:

**Table 7-2: Proposed SEA Objective for Landscape**

SEA Objective	Assessment Questions (Will the Option / Proposal Help to...)
Protect and enhance the character and quality of the immediate and surrounding landscape, including green infrastructure corridors.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Protect and/ or enhance local landscape character and quality of place?</li> <li>• Conserve and enhance local identity, diversity, and settlement character?</li> <li>• Identify and protect locally important viewpoints which contribute to character and sense of place?</li> <li>• Protect and extend/ enhance green infrastructure corridors?</li> <li>• Protect visual amenity?</li> <li>• Retain and enhance landscape features that contribute to the rural setting, including trees and hedgerows?</li> </ul>



## 8. Land, Soil and Water Resources

- 8.1 This theme focuses on the quality of soil resources, the extent of mineral resources, water supply resources and water quality in the neighbourhood area.

### Policy Context

- 8.2 **Table 8-1** presents the most relevant documents identified in the policy review for the purposes of the SEA.

**Table 8-1: Plans, Policies and Strategies Reviewed in Relation to Land, Soil, and Water Resources**

Document Title	Year of Publication
<b>National</b>	
<a href="#"><u>National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)</u></a>	2023
<a href="#"><u>The Waste Management Plan for England</u></a>	2021
<a href="#"><u>The 25 Year Environment Plan</u></a>	2018
<a href="#"><u>Future Water: The government's water strategy for England</u></a>	2011
<a href="#"><u>Water for Life</u></a>	2011
<a href="#"><u>Safeguarding our Soils: A strategy for England</u></a>	2009
<b>Local</b>	
<a href="#"><u>Wiltshire and Swindon Local Aggregate Assessment 2021</u></a>	2022
<a href="#"><u>Wessex Water's Water Resource Management Plan</u></a>	2019
<a href="#"><u>Wiltshire Council - Wiltshire Core Strategy</u></a>	2015
<a href="#"><u>Wiltshire Council - Emerging Local Plan (Reg 19)</u></a>	(emerging; Reg 19 submitted in 2023)
<a href="#"><u>Wiltshire and Swindon Minerals Core Strategy</u></a>	2009
<a href="#"><u>Wiltshire and Swindon Waste Core Strategy</u></a>	2009

- 8.3 The key messages emerging from the review are summarised below:

- The DMNP will be required to be in general conformity with the NPPF, which seeks to protect high quality soil resources, and improve the water environment; recognising the wider benefits of natural capital and derived from ecosystem services. Furthermore, the NPPF recognises the need to take account of the long-term implications of climate change and build resilience in this respect. The NPPF encourages efficient land use, utilising brownfield land opportunities and land remediation schemes where appropriate and delivering environmental gains;

- The NPPF places a requirement on mineral planning authorities to prepare an annual Local Aggregate Assessment (LAA), which reports on the demand for and supply of aggregates in their area. The relevant LAA for Dilton Marsh is the Wiltshire and Swindon LAA (2021);
- The 25-year Environment Plan presents a focus for environmental improvement in the next couple decades, with aims to achieve clean air, clean and plentiful water, and reduced risk from environmental hazards. This includes measures to improve soil quality, restore and protect peatlands, use water more sustainably, reduce pollution, maximise resource efficiency and minimise environmental impacts. This leads on from and supports the soil strategy for England (Safeguarding our soils) which seeks to ensure that all England's soils will be managed sustainably, and degradation threats tackled successfully by 2030, as well as the national water strategies which seek to secure sustainable and resilient water resources and improve the quality of waterbodies, and the national waste plan which seeks to identify measures being taken to move towards a zero-waste economy;
- The DMNP will also need to consider the relevant policies that are outlined in the WCS. Examples of relevant policies include:
  - Core Policy 50: Biodiversity and Geodiversity; and
  - Core Policy 68: Water Resources.
- Due regard should also be given to policies within the emerging Wiltshire Local Plan Review, which works to which works to safeguard and enhance land, soil, and water resources through tackling flood risk and promoting sustainable water management, and enhancing blue/green infrastructure and biodiversity. Examples of relevant policies include:
  - Policy 88: Biodiversity and Geodiversity; and
  - Policy 96: Water Resources.
- The neighbourhood area is serviced by Wessex Water. The Wessex Water Water Resources Management Plan (WRMP) outlines the issues the water provider faces, like climate change and supply problems, and outlines what measures will be taken to overcome these, including the installation of smart meters;
- The DMNP will be required to be in line with the Wiltshire and Swindon Minerals Core Strategy 2016-2026 which takes the overall approach to *“manage the availability, extraction and use of primary, secondary and recycled mineral resources whilst seeking to protect the interests of local communities and the wider environment through a series of strategic policies”*; and
- The DMNP will also be required to be in general conformity with the Wiltshire and Swindon Waste Core Strategy 2006-2026 which *“sets out the strategic planning policy framework for waste management...”* in the area.



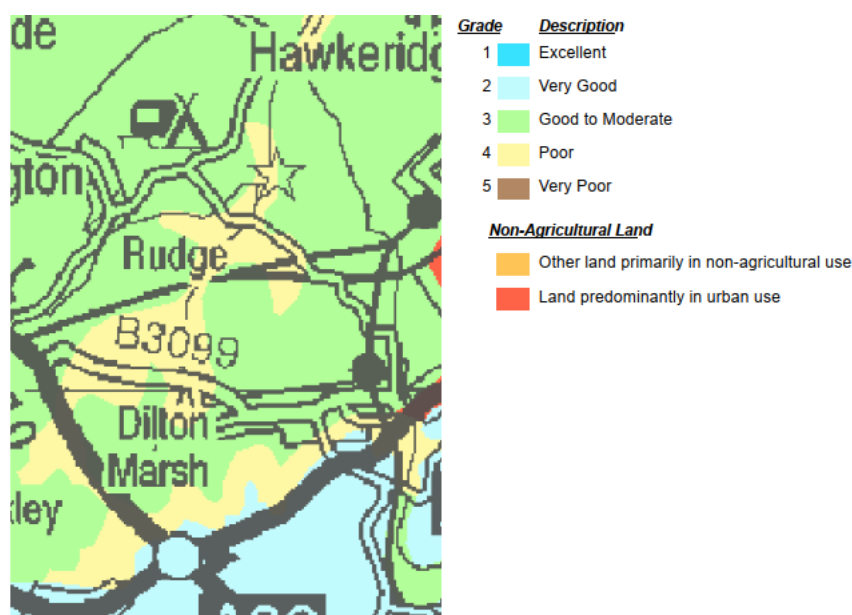
## Baseline Summary

### Current Baseline

#### *Agricultural Land*

- 8.4 The Agricultural Land Classification (ALC) classifies land into six grades (plus 'non-agricultural land' and 'urban'), where Grades 1 to 3a are recognised as being the 'best and most versatile' (BMV) land and Grades 3b to 5 are of poorer quality.
- 8.5 As shown in **Figure 8-1**, the neighbourhood area is mostly underlain by Grade 3 'Good to Moderate' agricultural land (it is not possible to determine whether this is Grade 3a or Grade 3b land given the map resolution). The neighbourhood area also has pockets of Grade 2 'Very Good' agricultural land (in the south-eastern region) and areas of Grade 4 'Poor' agricultural land (found north of the A3098 and in the central-western region). It will be important to protect the higher quality agricultural land from future development and promote the use of previously developed land where possible.

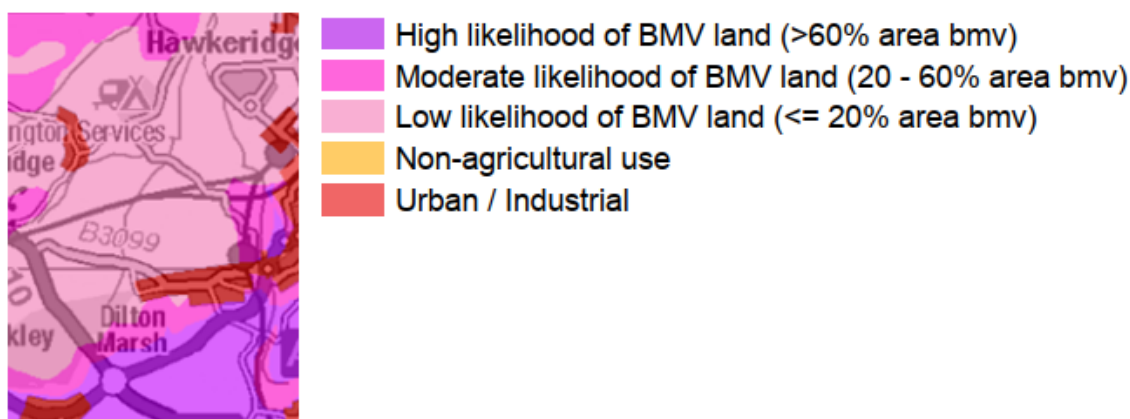
**Figure 8-1: Agricultural Land Classification for the Neighbourhood Area<sup>34</sup>**



- 8.6 **Figure 8-2** also shows the results of Natural England's 'Predictive Best and Most Versatile (BMV) Land Assessment' for the South West region. It indicates the majority of the undeveloped land within the neighbourhood area has a low likelihood of being BMV land, although the area to the south of Dilton Marsh village is comprised of moderate and high likelihood areas of BMV land.

<sup>34</sup> Natural England (2010) 'Agricultural Land Classification map South West Region (ALC006)' can be accessed [here](#).

**Figure 8-2: Likelihood of BMV Land Within the Neighbourhood Area<sup>35</sup>**



### *Mineral Resources*

- 8.7 Mineral resources are defined as natural concentrations of minerals or bodies of rock that have the potential to be of economic interest in the present or the future due to their inherent properties. As minerals are a non-renewable resource, minerals safeguarding is deployed as the process through which it is ensured that non-minerals development does not needlessly prevent the future extraction of mineral resources.<sup>36</sup>
- 8.8 The neighbourhood area does not overlap with any designations in the Wiltshire and Swindon Minerals Core Strategy.

### *Waste*

- 8.9 In relation to waste, the Wiltshire and Swindon Waste Core Strategy suggests that there are between three and five existing Local Waste Sites within the neighbourhood area (the actual figure is uncertain due to the resolution of the 'Key Strategy Diagram' that accompanies the Waste Core Strategy).<sup>37</sup> All but one of these are located in the north-western region of the neighbourhood area. One additional existing Local Waste Site may be present near the neighbourhood area's eastern boundary and north of the B3099.
- 8.10 There are no designated Strategic Waste Sites within the neighbourhood area.

### *Water Quality*

- 8.11 In terms of water quality, the entire neighbourhood area falls within the Severn River Basin District.
- 8.12 The area south of Dilton Marsh village falls within the Avon Upper Hampshire Operational Catchment in the South West GW Management Catchment. The remaining land within the neighbourhood area falls within the Avon Bristol Rural Operational Catchment in the Avon Bristol and Somerset North Streams Management Catchment.

<sup>35</sup> Natural England (2017) 'Likelihood of Best and Most Versatile (BMV) Agricultural Land – Strategic scale map South West Region' can be accessed [here](#).

<sup>36</sup> UK Government (2014) 'Guidance: Minerals' can be accessed [here](#).

<sup>37</sup> Wiltshire and Swindon Council (2009) 'Waste Core Strategy July 2009 Key Diagram' can be accessed [here](#).

8.13 There are two waterbodies in the neighbourhood area:

- 'Tributary - source to conf Biss Bk Water Body',<sup>38</sup> which lies in the northern region of the parish. In 2019, this waterbody was awarded a 'poor' ecological status and a 'failed' chemical status given the presence of priority hazardous substances mercury and Polybrominated diphenyl ethers (PBDE); and
- 'Biss Bk - source to conf unnamed trib Water Body',<sup>39</sup> which forms the majority of the neighbourhood areas eastern border. In 2019, this waterbody was awarded a 'poor' ecological status and a 'failed' chemical status given the presence of priority hazardous substances mercury and Polybrominated diphenyl ethers (PBDE).

8.14 In relation to water resources, the neighbourhood area is served by Wessex Water. The Environment Agency have published a document entitled 'Water Stressed Areas – 2021 classification' which included a map of England, identifying areas of relative water stress. In this regard, the whole of Wessex Water's supply area is shown as an area of 'Serious' water stress, based upon the amount of water available per person both now and in the future.<sup>40</sup>

8.15 Within their Water Resource Management Plans (WRMPs) water companies refer to their Water Resource Zones (WRZs). WRZs are the largest possible zone in which all resources, including external transfers, can be shared and hence the zone in which all customers experience the same risk of supply failure from a resource failure. In this respect, the neighbourhood area falls within the Wessex Water WRZ, which experiences pressures due to climate change and population growth.

8.16 Groundwater Source Protection Zones (SPZs) have been defined by the Environment Agency in England and Wales to protect groundwater sources such as wells, boreholes, and springs that are used for public drinking water supply.<sup>41</sup> There are no SPZ within the neighbourhood area.

## Future Baseline

8.17 Future development has the potential to affect soil resources in the Plan area through the loss of 'good' and 'good to moderate' quality agricultural land. The DMNP provides the opportunity to direct future growth away from areas of Grade 2 and 3a quality agricultural land, thereby minimising the likely impacts on soil resources by focusing growth on lower quality land.

8.18 Future development also has the potential to affect water quality through increased consumption, diffuse pollution, waste-water discharges, water run-off, and modification. Wessex Water are likely to maintain adequate water services over the plan period; therefore, it will be important for new development to avoid negative impacts on water quality, and instead contribute to reducing consumption and improving efficiency.

8.19 It is also noted that the requirements of the Water Framework Directive, as transposed into national legislation, are likely to lead to continued improvements to water quality within the DMNP and wider area. However, it

<sup>38</sup> Environment Agency (2022) 'Tributary - source to conf Biss Bk Water Body' can be accessed [here](#).

<sup>39</sup> Environment Agency (2022) 'Biss Bk - source to conf unnamed trib Water Body' can be accessed [here](#).

<sup>40</sup> Environment Agency and DEFRA (2021) 'Water stressed areas – 2021 classification' can be accessed [here](#).

<sup>41</sup> UK Government (2017) 'Groundwater Protection' can be accessed [here](#).

will nonetheless be important for new development to avoid impacts on water quality, and support demand management measures by contributing to reduced consumption and improved efficiency.

## Key Issues

8.20 Considering the policy context and baseline information, the following key issues (constraints and / or opportunities) are identified in relation to Land, Soil, and Water resources:

- The neighbourhood area is largely underlain by Grade 3 quality agricultural land, though the map resolution does not differentiate between Grade 3a or Grade 3b land. Additionally, there are also areas of Grade 2 and Grade 4 agricultural land. The DMNP provides opportunities to minimise the loss of higher-grade agricultural land by focusing development in areas underlain by Grade 3b and Grade 4 land;
- It will be important for future development to ensure that it avoids any detrimental impacts on water quality both on and off-site. Furthermore, the DMNP should seek to capitalise on any potential opportunities to improve water quality, particularly chemical quality; and
- The DMNP could also seek to support extended measures to improve the resilience of water supplies, including through local water recycling schemes and opportunities to increase efficiency in water use, given the population of the local area and the demand for water is expected to rise.

## SEA Objectives

8.21 Considering the key issues discussed above, it is proposed that the SEA should include the following objectives and assessment questions in relation to Land, Soil, and Water resources:

**Table 8-2: Proposed SEA Objectives for Land, Soil, and Water Resources**

SEA Objective	Assessment Questions (Will the Option / Proposal Help to...)
Ensure the efficient and effective use of land, and protect and enhance water quality, using water resources in a sustainable manner.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Avoid the loss of high-quality agricultural land resources?</li> <li>• Promote any opportunities for the use of previously developed land, or vacant / underutilised land?</li> <li>• Avoid impacts on water quality?</li> <li>• Support improvements to water quality?</li> <li>• Ensure appropriate drainage and mitigation is delivered alongside development?</li> <li>• Protect the neighbourhood area's waterbodies?</li> <li>• Maximise water efficiency and opportunities for water harvesting and/ or water recycling?</li> </ul>

## 9. Transportation

- 9.1 This theme focuses on transport infrastructure, transport usage, traffic flows and congestion, and accessibility levels in the neighbourhood area.

### Policy Context

- 9.2 **Table 9-1** presents the most relevant documents identified in the policy review for the purposes of the SEA.

**Table 9-1: Plans, Policies, and Strategies Reviewed in Relation to Transportation**

Document Title	Year of Publication
<b>National</b>	
<a href="#"><u>National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)</u></a>	2023
<a href="#"><u>Decarbonising Transport: A Better, Greener Britain</u></a>	2021
<a href="#"><u>Decarbonising Transport: Setting the Challenge</u></a>	2020
<a href="#"><u>The National Design Guide</u></a>	2019
<a href="#"><u>The Transport Investment Strategy – Moving Britain Ahead</u></a>	2017
<a href="#"><u>The Department for Transport's Cycling and Walking Investment Strategy</u></a>	2016
<b>Local</b>	
<a href="#"><u>Wiltshire Council - Wiltshire Core Strategy</u></a>	2015
<a href="#"><u>Wiltshire Council - Emerging Local Plan (Reg 19)</u></a>	(emerging; Reg 19 submitted in 2023)
<a href="#"><u>Wiltshire Local Transport Plan 3 (2011- 2026)</u></a>	2011

- 9.3 The key messages emerging from the review are summarised below:

- The DMNP will be required to be in general conformity with the NPPF, which seeks the consideration of transport issues from the earliest stages of plan-making and development proposals to address any known issues and maximise opportunities to increase accessibility, particularly by walking, cycling and public transport. Larger developments are expected to be delivered in areas which are or can be made sustainable by limiting the need to travel and offering a genuine choice of transport modes. However, it is recognised that sustainable transport solutions will vary between urban and rural environments;
- National transport strategies set out investment priorities which ultimately all seek to improve the connectivity, effectiveness and reliability of transport networks, whilst reducing impacts on the natural environment (including through decarbonisation). Furthermore, they place great emphasis on making cycling and walking the natural choice for shorter journeys, or as part

of a longer journeys. This includes investment in new and upgraded infrastructure, changing perceptions, and increasing safety;

- The DMNP will also need to consider the relevant policies that are outlined in the WCS. Examples of relevant policies include:
  - Core Policy 60: Sustainable Transport;
  - Core Policy 61: Transport and Development;
  - Core Policy 62: Development Impacts on the Transport network; and
  - Core Policy 63: Transport Strategies.
- Due regard should also be given to policies within the emerging Wiltshire Local Plan Review, which works to promote sustainable transport and active travel. Examples of relevant policies include:
  - Policy 70: Sustainable Transport;
  - Policy 71: Transport and Development;
  - Policy 72: Development Impacts on the Transport network; and
  - Policy 73: Transport Strategies.
- The Wiltshire Local Transport Plan 2011-2026 seeks the development of a transport system that supports economic growth, choice and opportunity across Wiltshire's communities whilst also being sensitive to the environment and considering climate emissions. The plan identifies the following five challenges in delivering a sustainable transport system for the area:
  - A largely rural county with many historic towns and villages;
  - Relatively high car ownership levels and small, isolated pockets of access deprivation;
  - The changing climate and the prospect of 'peak oil';
  - Significantly lower funding for transport; and
  - Increasingly elderly population.
- To address these challenges, the Wiltshire Local Transport Plan sets out several strategic objects to help achieve the following five goals:
  - Support economic growth;
  - Reduce carbon emissions;
  - Contribute to better safety, security, and health;
  - Promote equality of opportunity; and
  - Improve quality of life and a healthy natural environment.

## Baseline Summary

### Current Baseline

#### *Rail Network*

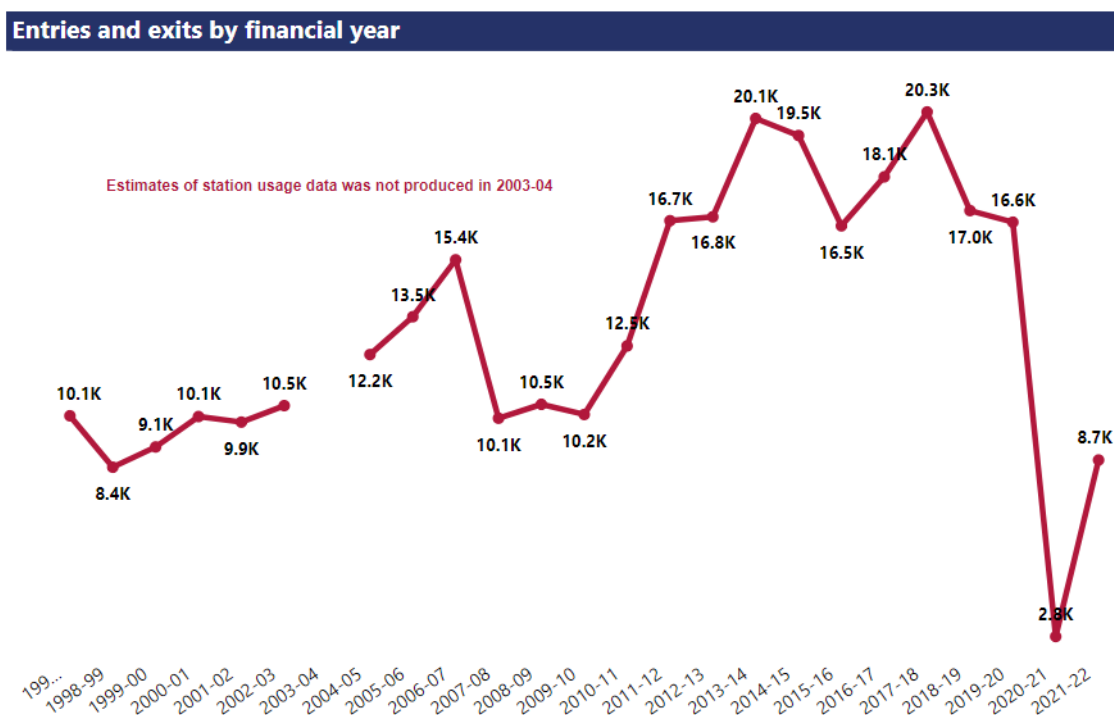
- 9.4 There is one rail station in the neighbourhood area – Dilton Marsh train station, which is operated by Great Western Railway and offers hourly services to neighbouring Westbury, and, more further afield, Bristol Temple Meads and



Warminster.<sup>42</sup> The only listed facility at the station is bicycle parking. No other facilities (including ticket office, ticket machines, toilets, or car parking spaces) are present at the station. Westbury train station (a five minute train journey from Dilton Marsh train station) also offers direct services to London Paddington to the east and Plymouth to the south-west; therefore, the neighbourhood area benefits from being well-connected by train to areas in the south of England.

- 9.5 According to the Office of Rail and Road, estimated usage of Dilton Marsh train station was 8,700 users in 2021/22; a significant drop from its peak in 2017/18, when there were of 20,300 users (see **Figure 9-1**).<sup>43</sup> This same negative trend has emerged throughout the entire region of Wiltshire, likely stemming from lockdown periods associated with the COVID-19 pandemic and the consequential shifts in cultural norms, particularly the rise of the working from home. Despite reduced passenger numbers being a county-wide issue, passenger numbers in Dilton Marsh have shown a slower recovery when compared to other stations in Wiltshire.

**Figure 9-1: Passenger Numbers at Dilton Marsh Train Station**<sup>44</sup>



### Bus Network

- 9.6 According to Bustimes,<sup>45</sup> there are two bus services within the neighbourhood area:

- The 47 service, run by FromeBus, operating from Frome, through Dilton Marsh, to Westbury. This is an hourly service, running between 9 and 5:30 on weekdays, and between 8 and 4 on Saturdays. There is no service on Sundays; and

<sup>42</sup> GWR (2022) 'Dilton Marsh' can be accessed [here](#).

<sup>43</sup> Office of Rail and Road (2023) 'Estimates of station usage' can be accessed [here](#).

<sup>44</sup> Ibid.

<sup>45</sup> Bustimes (no date) 'Dilton Marsh' can be accessed [here](#).



- The X47 service, run by Faresaver, operating from Frome, through Dilton Marsh and Westbury, to Trowbridge. This is an limited service, offering one eastbound trip in the morning and one westbound trip in the afternoon (weekdays only).
- 9.7 Both buses serve Dilton Marsh village; places within the neighbourhood area, but outside of the village, are isolated from public transport connections.

### *Road Network and Congestion*

- 9.8 The neighbourhood area's road network consists mostly of lanes and country roads; however, there are also two A Roads (A36 and A3098) and one B road (B3099).
- 9.9 The A36 forms part of the neighbourhood area's western boundary and allows access to Warminster and Salisbury to the south, and Beckington and Bath to the north. In the Wiltshire Local Transport Plan 3, this road is noted to be designated as a Local Lorry Route.
- 9.10 The A3098 and B3099 pass through the central and southern regions of the neighbourhood area, and offer access to Westbury to the west, and Frome to the east. NPSG understand that it is on these two roads where the neighbourhood area experiences its highest volumes of congestion. The congestion issues have grown in recent years with the additional pressures to the road network as a result of the westward expansion of Westbury at Leigh Park. This is despite the introduction of traffic calming measures at the eastern end of the High Street.
- 9.11 NPSG also note that availability of parking is an issue in the neighbourhood area, with there being limited spaces available. This results in parking within the carriageway being an issue in the town of Dilton Marsh, when the existing limited number of parking spaces have been filled.

### *Public Rights of Way (PRoW) and Cycleways*

- 9.12 According to the digital map available on the Wiltshire Council website,<sup>46</sup> there is an extensive PRoW network (comprised of footpaths and bridleways) across the entirety of the neighbourhood area.
- 9.13 Section 2 of the Wiltshire Cycleway passes through Dilton Marsh village.<sup>47</sup> The Cycleway connects the neighbourhood area to Bradford on Avon (to the north) and Maiden Bradley (to the south).

## **Future Baseline**

- 9.14 Given there are options within the neighbourhood area to sustainable transport within the neighbourhood area and for travel outside of it (rail network and bus network), it is difficult to predict the volume of private vehicle usage. Although use of sustainable transport should be encouraged, for example by early provision of local bus services in new developments, allowance must be made for potential private vehicle use to avoid further traffic congestion. However, a minor increase could still have an impact on the traffic concerns related to the A3098 and B3099.

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<sup>46</sup> Wiltshire Council (2021) 'Wiltshire Council Rights of Way Explorer' can be accessed [here](#).

<sup>47</sup> Wiltshire Council (no date) 'Wiltshire Cycleway' can be accessed [here](#).

9.15 As discussed in previous chapters, considering the COVID-19 pandemic and changing working habits, the provision of infrastructure to facilitate working from home may contribute towards transport management, but it is difficult to predict the long term outcome. Whilst negative effects of new development on the transport network are likely to be mitigated in part by new infrastructure, there will be a continuing need for development to be situated in accessible locations.

## Key Issues

9.16 Considering the policy context and baseline information, the following key issues (constraints and / or opportunities) are identified in relation to Transportation:

- There is a rail station in Dilton Marsh village, offering links to Bristol and Warminster. There is also a limited bus network that runs within the village of Dilton Marsh and externally to locations such as Trowbridge, Westbury, and Frome. In this sense, Dilton Marsh village is well connected; however, given that most of the neighbourhood area is rural, locations outside of Dilton Marsh village are likely to rely on private modes of transport;
- Dilton Marsh village is well served by the road network, however it is noted there are issues with congestion on the A3098 and B3099;
- There is an extensive PRoW network in the neighbourhood area, and development should seek to connect with and where possible extend this PRoW network, thereby maximising pedestrian and cycling opportunities for leisure, working and shopping; and
- The recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic has the potential to change travel patterns in the short, medium and (potentially) longer term.

## SEA Objective

9.17 Considering the key issues discussed above, it is proposed that the SEA should include the following objective and assessment questions for Transportation:

**Table 9-2: Proposed SEA Objective for Transportation**

SEA Objective	Assessment Questions (Will the Option / Proposal Help to...)
Promote sustainable transport use and reduce the need to travel.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Support the objectives within the Wiltshire Local Transport Plan to encourage the use of more sustainable transport modes?</li> <li>• Encourage the uptake of active travel opportunities?</li> <li>• Extend or improve active travel networks?</li> <li>• Facilitate working from home to reduce the use of private vehicles to access workplaces outside of the neighbourhood area?</li> <li>• Improve road safety?</li> <li>• Reduce the impact on residents from the road network?</li> <li>• Improve parking facilities?</li> </ul>

## 10. Next steps

### SEA Stages

10.1 Scoping (the current stage) is the second stage of the SEA process:

1. Screening;
2. Scoping;
3. Assess reasonable alternatives (to inform preparation of the draft plan); and
4. Prepare the Environmental Report (to inform consultation and plan finalisation).

10.2 The next stage will involve appraising reasonable alternatives for the DMNP. The findings of the appraisal of these alternatives will be fed back to the Parish Council so that they might be considered when preparing the draft plan.

10.3 Once the draft ('pre-submission version') plan has been prepared by the Parish Council, it will be subjected to SEA and the Environmental Report prepared for consultation alongside it.

10.4 Following consultation on the draft Neighbourhood Plan and the Environmental Report, the Neighbourhood Plan will be finalised and submitted to Wiltshire Council for Independent Examination.

### Consultation on the Scoping Report

10.5 Public involvement through consultation is a key element of the SEA process. At this scoping stage, the SEA Regulations require consultation with statutory consultation bodies but not full consultation with the public.

10.6 The statutory consultation bodies are the Environment Agency, Historic England, and Natural England. This Scoping Report has been released to these three statutory consultees.

10.7 Consultees are invited to comment on the content of this Scoping Report, particularly the evidence base for the SEA, the identified key issues, and the proposed SEA Framework.

10.8 The consultation period runs from 20 November 2023 to 5 January 2023. Comments on the Scoping Report should be sent to:

Antonio Vinti, AECOM

Email address: [antonio.vinti@aecom.com](mailto:antonio.vinti@aecom.com)

10.9 All comments received on the Scoping Report will be reviewed and will influence the development of the SEA where appropriate.

# Appendix A Proposed SEA Framework

The SEA framework has been established through the identification of key issues and environmental objectives as part of the scoping exercise. This draws upon the baseline position and policy context that has been prepared for a range of SEA themes (as set out in Chapters 2-9).

The framework consists of a set of headline objectives and supporting assessment questions, which will be used to appraise the environmental effects of the draft Plan (and reasonable alternatives).

**Table A.1** below outlines the proposed SEA framework, bringing together the objectives and assessment questions that have been set out at the end of each SEA theme.

**Table A.1: Proposed SEA Framework**

SEA Theme	SEA Objective	Supporting Questions (Will the Option/ Proposal Help to...)
Biodiversity	Maintain and enhance the extent and quality of biodiversity habitats and networks within and surrounding the neighbourhood area.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Protect and enhance nationally, and locally designated sites, including supporting habitats and mobile species that are important to the integrity of these sites?</li> <li>• Protect and enhance priority habitats and the links between them?</li> <li>• Achieve a net gain in biodiversity?</li> <li>• Support habitat restoration or new habitat creation within the identified Network Enhancement or Expansion Zones?</li> <li>• Support enhancements to multifunctional green infrastructure networks and the network of open spaces?</li> </ul>
Climate Change (including Flood Risk)	Reduce the contribution to climate change made by activities in the neighbourhood area.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reduce the number of journeys made by polluting vehicles?</li> <li>• Promote the use of sustainable modes of transport, including walking, cycling and public transport?</li> <li>• Improve or extend local footpaths, cycle paths or strategic green infrastructure routes?</li> <li>• Increase the number of new development meeting or exceeding sustainable design criteria?</li> <li>• Generate energy from low or zero carbon sources?</li> <li>• Reduce energy consumption from non-renewable resources?</li> </ul>

SEA Theme	SEA Objective	Supporting Questions (Will the Option/ Proposal Help to...)
	Support the resilience of the neighbourhood area to the potential effects of climate change, including flood risk.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Support the transition to electric vehicles?</li> <li>• Avoid inappropriate development in areas at risk of flooding, considering the likely future effects of climate change?</li> <li>• Improve and extend green infrastructure networks in the neighbourhood area?</li> <li>• Sustainably manage water runoff?</li> <li>• Increase the resilience of the local built and natural environment?</li> <li>• Ensure the potential risks associated with climate change are duly considered in the design of new development in the neighbourhood area?</li> </ul>
Community Wellbeing	Ensure growth in the neighbourhood area is aligned with the needs of all residents and in suitably connected places, supported by the appropriate and timely provision of infrastructure to enable cohesive and inclusive communities.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provide everyone with the opportunity to live in good quality and affordable housing?</li> <li>• Support the provision of a range of house types and sizes targeted at aligning the housing stock with local needs?</li> <li>• Provide flexible and adaptable homes that meet people's changing needs?</li> <li>• Improve the availability and/ or accessibility of local services and facilities?</li> <li>• Encourage and promote social cohesion and active involvement of local people in community activities?</li> <li>• Contribute to improving aspects of deprivation in the neighbourhood area?</li> <li>• Maintain or enhance the quality of life of existing and future residents?</li> </ul>
Historic Environment	Protect, conserve and enhance the historic environment within and surrounding the neighbourhood area.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Conserve and enhance buildings and structures of architectural or historic interest, both designated and non-designated, and their settings?</li> <li>• Conserve and enhance the special interest, character and appearance of locally important features and their settings?</li> </ul>

SEA Theme	SEA Objective	Supporting Questions (Will the Option/ Proposal Help to...)
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Protect the integrity of the historic setting of key monuments of cultural heritage interest as listed in the Wiltshire and Swindon HER?</li> <li>• Support the undertaking of early archaeological investigations and, where appropriate, recommend mitigation strategies?</li> <li>• Support access to, interpretation and understanding of the historic evolution and character of the neighbourhood area?</li> </ul>
Landscape	Protect and enhance the character and quality of the immediate and surrounding landscape, including green infrastructure corridors.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Protect and/ or enhance local landscape character and quality of place?</li> <li>• Conserve and enhance local identity, diversity, and settlement character?</li> <li>• Identify and protect locally important viewpoints which contribute to character and sense of place?</li> <li>• Protect and extend/ enhance green infrastructure corridors?</li> <li>• Protect visual amenity?</li> <li>• Retain and enhance landscape features that contribute to the rural setting, including trees and hedgerows?</li> </ul>
Land, Soil, and Water Resources	Ensure the efficient and effective use of land, and protect and enhance water quality, using water resources in a sustainable manner.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Avoid the loss of high-quality agricultural land resources?</li> <li>• Promote any opportunities for the use of previously developed land, or vacant / underutilised land?</li> <li>• Avoid impacts on water quality?</li> <li>• Support improvements to water quality?</li> <li>• Ensure appropriate drainage and mitigation is delivered alongside development?</li> <li>• Protect the neighbourhood area's waterbodies?</li> <li>• Maximise water efficiency and opportunities for water harvesting and/ or water recycling?</li> </ul>
Transportation	Promote sustainable transport use and reduce the need to travel.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Support the objectives within the Wiltshire Local Transport Plan to</li> </ul>

SEA Theme	SEA Objective	Supporting Questions (Will the Option/ Proposal Help to...)
		<p>encourage the use of more sustainable transport modes?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Encourage the uptake of active travel opportunities?</li> <li>• Extend or improve active travel networks?</li> <li>• Facilitate working from home to reduce the use of private vehicles to access workplaces outside of the neighbourhood area?</li> <li>• Improve road safety?</li> <li>• Reduce the impact on residents from the road network?</li> <li>• Improve parking facilities?</li> </ul>



