

Iwerne Minster Neighbourhood Plan

Strategic Environmental Assessment
Pre-submission Draft Plan
Environmental Report

Non-Technical Summary

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Non-Technical Summary

This non-technical summary explains the scope and main findings of the Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) of the Iwerne Minster Neighbourhood Plan, at its pre-submission draft plan stage. The full environmental report is being consulted on at the same time as the pre-submission draft of the Iwerne Minster Neighbourhood Plan.

The assessment has been undertaken to comply with the SEA Regulations. It is subject to consultation with the Environment Agency, Natural England and Historic England, the public and any other interested parties. It considers the likely effects of the plan on the environment, and its evaluation includes an assessment of reasonable alternatives. It also considers appropriate mitigation and monitoring measures.

As a first step, various plans and programmes were reviewed and information collected on the environmental characteristics of the Neighbourhood Plan Area. The review included an appraisal of the National Planning Policy Framework, the adopted North Dorset Local Plan, and key documents that informed the scope of the Local Plan's own sustainability appraisal. The views of the Environment Agency, Natural England and Historic England were also sought on the proposed scope of the SEA.

The key environmental issues that may be relevant for the SEA were identified as:

- Potential impact on the Cranborne Chase and West Wiltshire Downs AONB and on local landscape character in general
- Potential impact on the area's heritage assets, most notably the Conservation Area and Listed Buildings
- Potential impact on protected species and locally important wildlife habitats
- Potential flood risk to new or existing development as a result of siting within a flood risk area or increased run-off
- Potential loss of productive farmland or minerals resources
- Potential impact on health and wellbeing, in terms of opportunities for housing and employment, and access to services, in a manner that is safe and available to all

These issues formed the development of objectives used to assess the likely environmental impact of the emerging plan.

The main focus of the assessment has been on the proposed site allocations. This has been supported by expert / technical input from a range of organisations (North Dorset District Council, Dorset County Council, the AONB Partnership and Wessex Water), together with commissioned report on ecology covering most of the preferred sites.

Table 10: Sustainability Assessment – Cumulative Impacts

SEA objective	Biodiversity	Landscape	Cultural heritage	Soil, water and air	Climatic factors	Population and health	Material assets	
Policy 1.1 Landscape Setting	✓	✓✓	✓	-	-	-	-	✗
Policy 1.2 Water Heritage	✓	✓✓	✓	-	-	-	-	-
Policy 1.3 Local Green Spaces	✓	✓	✓	-	-	-	-	✓
Policy 2.1 Parish facilities	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	✓
Policy 2.2 Communications	-	✗	✗	-	-	-	✓	✓
Policy 3.1 The Trout Farm	-	-	-	👉	✗	✗✗	✓	-
Policy 3.3 Miles Field	-	✗	-	-	✗	-	✓✓	-
Policy 3.4 The Old Bakery	-	✗	✗	-	-	-	✓	-
Policy 3.5 Land east of Orchard House	-	✗	-	-	✗	-	✓	-
Policy 3.6 Thatchways	👉	✗	-	-	✗	-	✓	-
Policy 3.7 Lower Field Barn	-	-	-	-	-	-	✓	✗
Policy 3.8 Woodlynch Fruit Farm	-	👉	👉	-	✗	-	✓	-
Policy 3.9 Brookman’s Farm Bungalow	✗	✗	👉	-	-	-	✓	-

This analysis indicates that the general policies should provide mainly positive benefits. Although there may be some harm from the site-specific development proposals, particular in regard to landscape, this has been moderated through the requirement for appropriate mitigation, and securing schemes that provide a sensitive transition between village and countryside. Specific recommendations have been made in relation to three policies:

- **Policy 3.1 Trout Farm:** include reference to requirement for odour impact and flood risk assessments as pre-requisites to demonstrate that development can take place without risk to health, and that any necessary mitigation measures are secured.
- **Policy 3.8 Woodlynch Fruit Farm:** include reference to retention of mature trees along the western edge, and that the design and layout will need to be accompanied by a heritage impact assessment and biodiversity mitigation assessment and include any necessary mitigation these identify. In order to reduce impact on productive farmland, the development area should be restricted (based on current density levels this could be to no more than 0.1ha)
- **Policy 3.9 Brookman's Farm Bungalow:** include reference to minimising the loss of the hedgerow and providing suitable mitigation to compensate for the loss, as assessed through a biodiversity mitigation assessment. The design and layout should include a suitable landscaping scheme to minimise the impact on

the AONB and allow glimpsed views of the church tower from public rights of way to the east.

The cumulative impact on soils - in terms of the loss of productive farmland (given that the village is generally surrounded by higher grade agricultural land) - is also a potential concern. The total area of farmland that may be lost to development is in the region of 2.5ha, although this would reduce to around 1.2ha if the site area in relation to Woodlynch Fruit Farm was moderated, as suggested above. The absence of alternative site options that are not in agricultural use however means that this cumulative impact cannot be avoided if the housing need is to be met.

The significant effects of plans should be monitored. The main significant impacts identified are in relation to the delivery of housing and affordable housing, landscape, flood risk and cumulative loss of productive farmland, although the latter two may be reduced with amendments to the policy wording. In regard to these, the existing monitoring arrangements set out in the adopted Local Plan include:

- Overall provision of new dwellings
- Number of affordable homes approved per annum
- Number of planning applications approved annually contrary to Environment Agency advice
- Number of planning applications approved against AONB Management Board advice
- Loss of agricultural land and buildings to other use per annum

It is suggested that two additional indicators are measured

- Number of planning applications approved annually contrary to Flood Risk Management Team advice
- Monitoring of fixed point photography of the village edge (particularly from the higher ground to the south and east), to enable the impact of development to be assessed. Two potential locations (the two viewpoints F and G. highlighted in the Village Design Statement, see Appendix 2) are suggested.

The above monitoring, if made available in relation to the Neighbourhood Plan area, should enable most of the significant effects of the plan to be considered.