

8. Green Infrastructure

258. This section of the neighbourhood plan sets out strategy and policies to protect and enhance a range of green infrastructure within Wool Parish.

Local Green Spaces

259. In recognition of the need to clearly identify and protect important local green spaces, the neighbourhood plan identifies sites for which Local Green Space designation is sought. The Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group used their local knowledge and feedback from consultation to identify a long list of sites that could be considered for designation as Local Green Spaces.

260. A key principle of Local Green Space policy is that sites that do not need additional protection should not be designated. The Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group took this into account where appropriate. The Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group assessed against the criteria set out in paragraph 102 of the National Planning Policy Framework. To be suitable for designation, a site should:

- a) be in reasonably close proximity to the community it serves
- b) be demonstrably special to a local community
- c) hold a particular local significance, for example, because of its
 - i. beauty,
 - ii. historic significance,
 - iii. recreational value (including as a playing field),
 - iv. tranquillity or
 - v. richness of its wildlife
- d) be local in character and is not an extensive tract of land.

261. The results of the assessment of the sites and specific Local Green Space proposals are set out in **Appendix B**. The sites proposed for designation as Local Green Space have been subject to consultation directly with the relevant landowners.

WOOL 13 – Local Green Space Sites

The following sites, detailed in Appendix B, are designated as Local Green Spaces, and other than in very special circumstances, no inappropriate development will be permitted within them that would harm their green character and reason for designation.

GS01 East Burton Village Green

GS02 Millennium Square, Wool

Allotments

262. Growing food in communities has multiple benefits in providing local sources of healthy fruit and vegetables, providing healthy outlets for active lifestyles for all age groups and retaining community knowledge about food and food growing. The provision of allotments is valued in Wool Parish, evidenced by the number of people on waiting lists to rent an allotment.

263. The Purbeck Local Plan 2018-2034 does not propose a standard for allotments provision. It refers to the Southeast Dorset Green Infrastructure Strategy 2010 and points to the Infrastructure Delivery Plan as the means through which community infrastructure requirements are addressed.

264. The Green Infrastructure Strategy does not set standards for allotments provision and the Infrastructure Delivery Plan indicates that allotments will be secured through CIL by parish and town councils who can fund and provide allotments, or through Section 106 Agreements in specific cases. As has been noted elsewhere in the neighbourhood plan, Wool Parish will not receive CIL from allocated housing sites to invest and meet the needs of a growing local population.
265. The National Society of Allotment and Leisure Gardeners (NSALG) recommends a quantitative standard of 20 plots per 1000 households (approximately 20 plots per 2200 people). The size of an allotment plot is 250 square metres (0.025ha) give a rough minimum requirement of at least 0.5 hectares per 1,000 households.
266. Within Wool Parish as a whole, there are currently 54 allotment plots. According to the 2021 Census, the population of the Parish is 5,400 and the number of households is 2,000. Considering the Parish as a whole against the NSALG Standard, there are sufficient allotment plots.
267. Allotments need to be in close proximity to those using them, so it makes sense to look at Bovington separately from Wool and East Burton given their separation. There are 19 plots located in Bovington and 35 plots are in Wool Village.
268. The population of Bovington LSOA was 2,586 in 2011 (Census results). Five more plots are required to meet the standard based on population within Bovington. The 2011 population of Wool Village and Wool and East Burton LSOAs was 2,784. This would indicate excess supply of plots based on the standard.
269. However, allotments provision is clearly insufficient to meet current demand. Around 35 people living in Wool Village and East Burton are on the waiting list for an allotment plot (June 2023 figure) and two people are on the waiting list in Bovington. The neighbourhood plan promotes further provision of allotments to meet sustained demand from residents to grow healthy food locally.
270. With regard to current supply, 5 additional allotment plots in Bovington and 10 additional plots Wool Village and East Burton are needed to meet demand and ensure that allotments can continue their role in community development and health.
271. Planned development in the Purbeck Local Plan 2018–2034 would deliver 470 homes (adding not less than 470 households) and this would likely grow the number of people in Wool and East Burton by around 1,128 people (assuming 2.4 people per household). This would generate a further need for 10 allotment plots based on the standard for population, equivalent to roughly 0.25 hectares of allotments. Should emerging Dorset Local Plan proposals be included, this would generate a further 500+ dwellings and so generate a requirement for a further 10 plots.
272. Based on existing allotments provision and demand, population growth through planned development and the application of standards for allotment provision, 35 additional allotments will need to be provided during the neighbourhood plan period.

WOOL 14 – Allotments for Wool Parish

When using policies I1, I7 and H5 of the Purbeck Local Plan 2018–2034 in the determination of relevant planning applications and to formulate investment priorities, Dorset Council should have regard to the need for allotments provision in Wool Parish. Positive consideration should be given to opportunities to provide allotments within strategic development sites in the parish or financial contributions to provision on other sites.

Future local plan proposals for development in Wool Parish should include requirement for allotment provision at the standard of 0.20 hectares of allotments per 1,000 population or at a standard deemed appropriate by Dorset Council.

Habitat Protection and Biodiversity Net Gain

273. Nationally, European and internationally important wildlife sites are particularly focused on the heathlands, water meadows and Poole Harbour. The area is extremely rich in protected species.
274. Within 400m of a protected heathland site (SAC) residential development that would involve a net increase in dwellings, tourist accommodation and equestrian related development will not be permitted. Between 400m and 5km of a heathland site, mitigation measures are likely to be required to mitigate the adverse effects on the sites' integrity.
275. These can take the form of Heathland Infrastructure Projects (HIPs), including e.g. Suitable Alternative Natural Greenspace (SANG) and Strategic Access Management and Monitoring (SAMM) provision in accordance with the Dorset Heathlands Planning Framework SPD1.
276. All development will need to accord with the Purbeck Local Plan 2018-2034 Policy E9 and the Recreation in Poole Harbour SPD. Developments will also be required to mitigate the impact of any increase in nitrogen produced by sewage from new homes that may adversely affect Poole Harbour, in line with the Local Plan policy.
277. Detailed advice and support is needed for parish councils in Dorset preparing neighbourhood plans and hopefully, in time, this will be available. The neighbourhood plan seeks to ensure that, where new development is proposed, opportunities for repair to habitats, enhancement of species and new habitat creation with the aim of strengthening nature recovery networks, are firstly available and secured in Wool Parish. The aim is to ensure that investment in Biodiversity Net Gain benefits the wildlife and people of the Parish and in the process contributes to the delivery of wider emerging Local Nature Recovery Strategies. The mechanism for Biodiversity Net Gain has now been published and became mandatory on 12th February 2024 by virtue of Schedule 7A of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as inserted by Schedule 14 of the Environment Act 2021). This incentivises developers to provide the requisite 10% net gain as locally as possible to the development.
278. Opportunities may also exist to connect habitats and in so doing also provide new or improved walking links within the Parish. It should also provide a means to inform suitable landscape buffers between existing and new planned development.
279. Opportunities to restore and enhance blue infrastructure running through the parish should be considered, for example through natural flood management, river restoration including de-culverting or naturalisation, sustainable drainage systems and the protection of existing natural assets.

WOOL 15 – Biodiversity Net Gain Opportunities for Wool Parish

Development will only be supported where it would not lead to an adverse effect upon the integrity, either alone or in-combination, directly or indirectly, on European sites. New development should incorporate proposals to meet statutory requirements for bio-diversity net gain in full on land within Wool Parish to improve the local ecological network. Where this cannot be achieved within development sites or on land within the parish, then opportunities to establish off-site bio-diversity net gain should in the first instance be sought to improve ecological networks within close proximity to Wool Parish.