Table of Contents

Individuals involved in collecting evidence for this topic
Sally Bowsher (lead)

Document purpose

To set out the rationale and evidence collected to support policies to provide safe, sensible and sustainable development that prevents flooding and maintains nutrient neutrality in the water catchment area.

Introduction

The villages of Puncknowle, Swyre and West Bexington (the '3 Villages' neighbourhood planning area) are set in West Dorset stretching inland from the Jurassic Coast, and part of the much wider Dorset National Landscape.

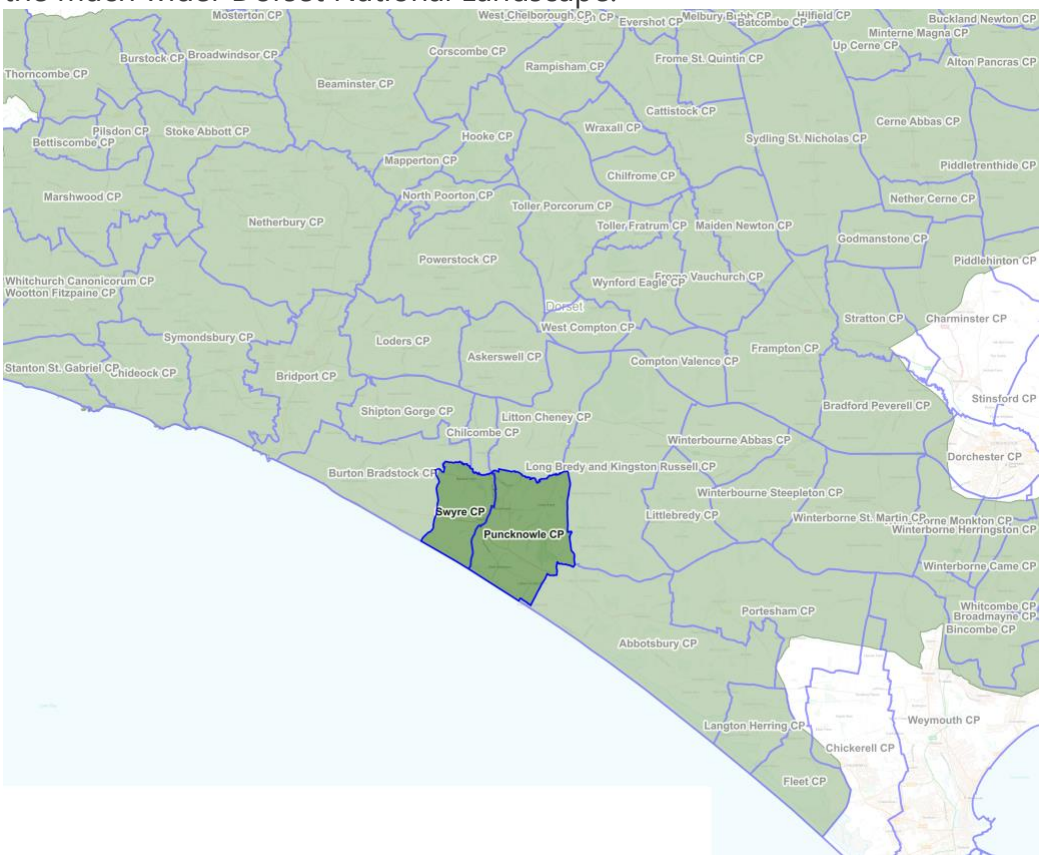


Figure 1 The designated area of this plan (in dark green) is situated within the much wider area of the Dorset Natural Landscape (the light green shaded area)

All three villages are located at the foot of an exposed promontory called the Knoll. With a height of 180 meters above sea level, the Knoll catches much of the wind and rain, and this water radiates outwards in all directions to the various spring lines which would have enabled people to settle centuries before the advent of modern-day mains water and wastewater management. Rainwater ultimately runs down to the valley to the north of the parish into the River Bride, or south to the coast along Chesil Beach.

As climate change has increased the intensity of rainfall, so has it increased the potential for flooding. Nature, biodiversity, and wildlife habitats are all adversely affected by flood water

when it has high levels of agricultural runoff, i.e. it is not nutrient neutral. The coastal area of the parish incorporates an SSSI and is situated next to a RAMSAR1 site which extends along Chesil Beach until Portland, and to the north, the River Bride which enters the sea at Burton Bradstock, as shown on the map below:

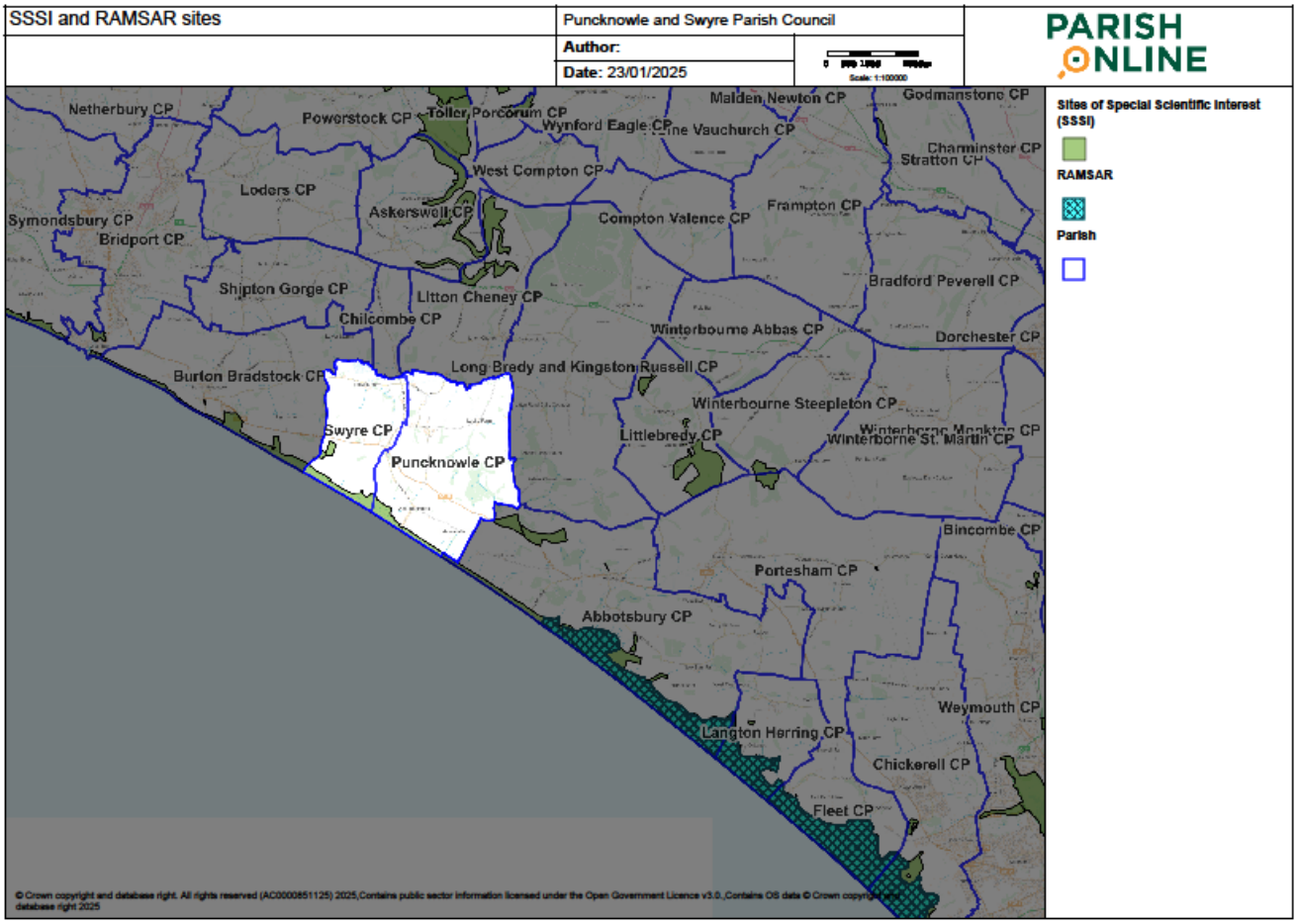


Figure 2 The parish includes an area of SSSI along the coast and is adjacent to a RAMSAR area to the East along Chesil Bank

Neighbourhood planning introduces the opportunity to explore the vulnerability of our local community to the effects of climate change and see what opportunities are available to increase our community's resilience. (See Appendix 1)

[1] An SSSI is an environmentally protected area, designated for their special wildlife geology or landform an RAMSAR sites are wetlands of national importance.

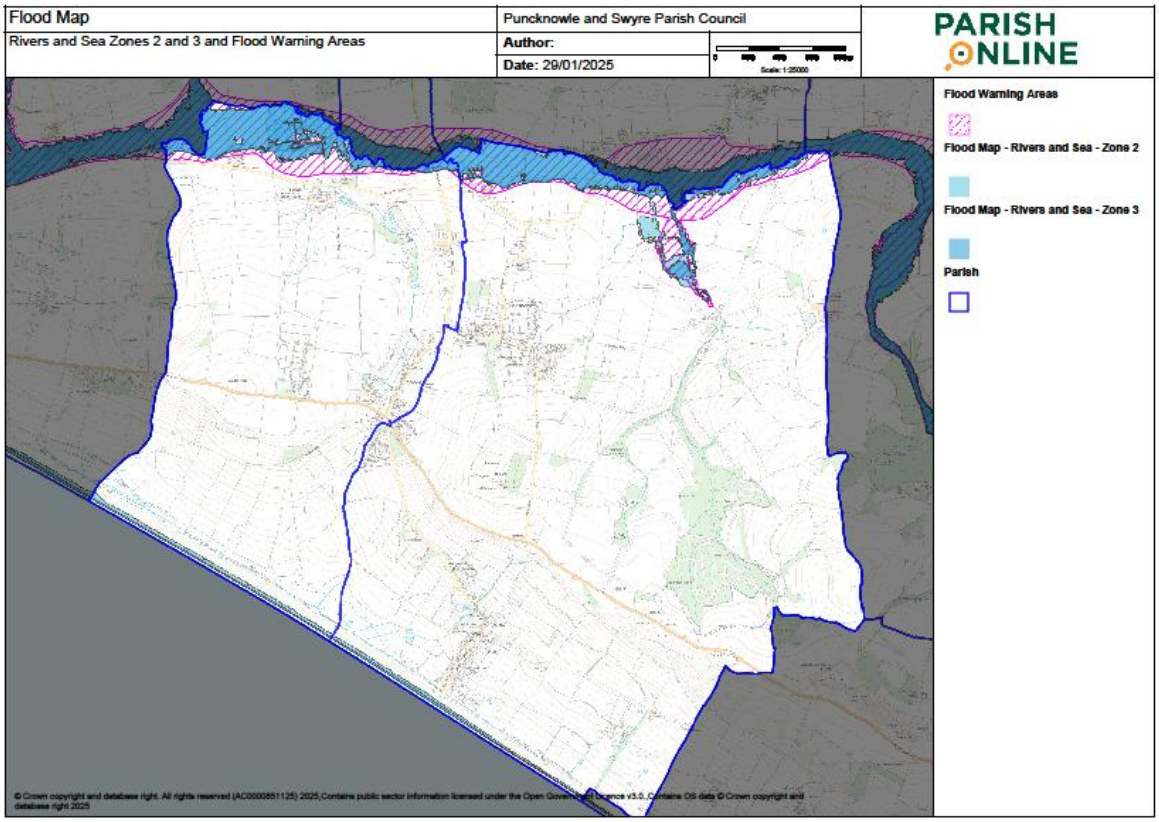


Figure 3 Map of flood risk areas (Flood Warning Areas, Rivers and Sea, and Flooding Zones 2 and 3)

Most of the parish is in Flood Zone 1, with the exception of the river area to the north and the coastal area to the south.
Flood Zone 1 – Land having a less than 0.1% (1 in 1000) annual probability of flooding.
Flood Zone 2 – Land having between 0.1% - 1% (1 in 100 to 1 in 1000) annual probability of flooding from rivers or between 0.1% - 0.5% (1 in 200 to 1 in 1000) annual probability of flooding from the sea, and accepted recorded flood outlines .
Flood Zone 3 – Areas shown to be at a 1% (1 in 100) or greater annual probability of flooding from rivers or 0.5% (1 in 200) or greater annual probability of flooding from the sea.

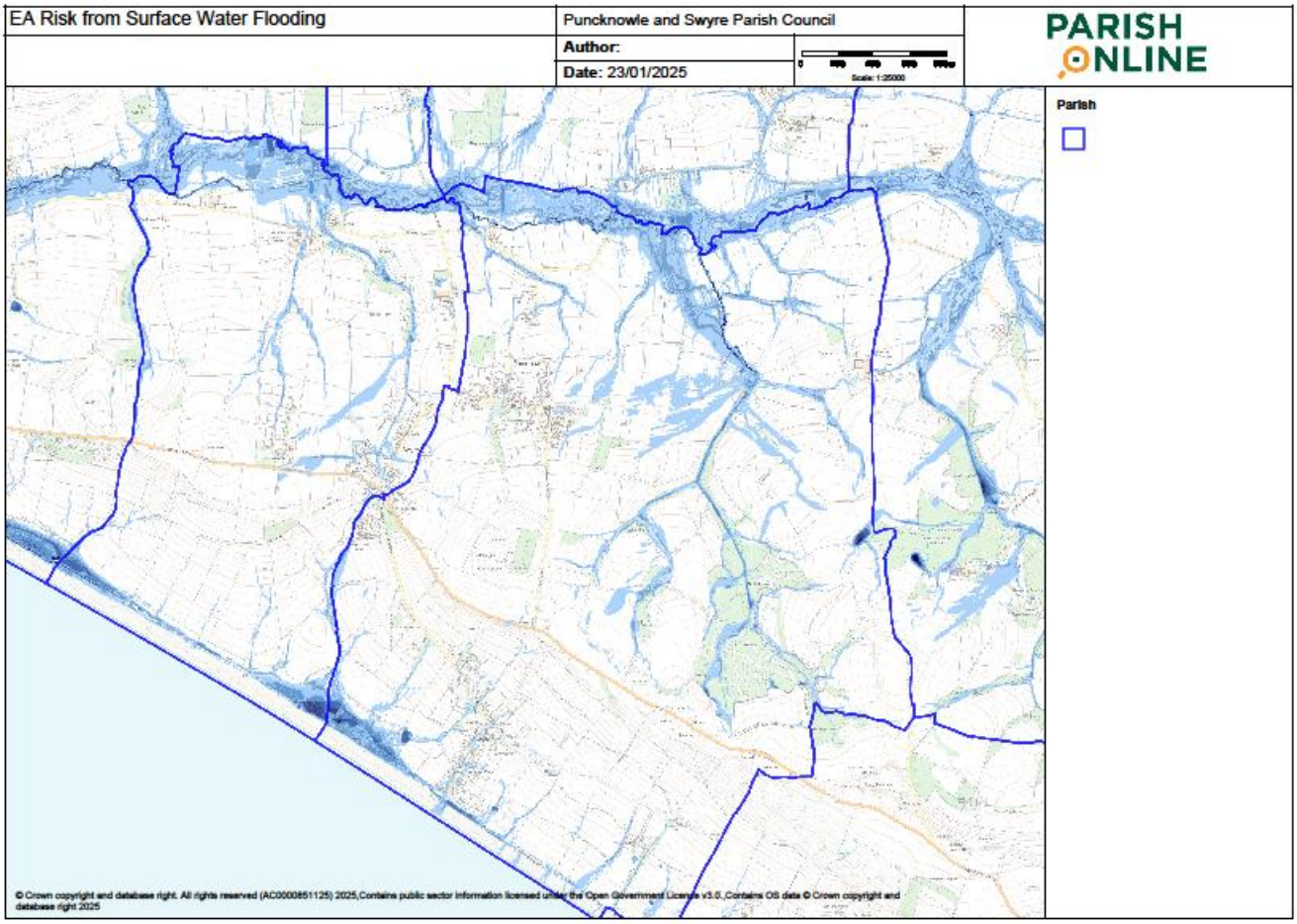


Figure 4 - Areas at risk of surface water flooding (based on Environment Agency data)

Evidence assessed and who produced it (inc. secondary sources)

The Lead Local Authority/ Flood Risk Strategy and Flood Risk Management.
The Environment Agency is the lead body for Fluvial Risk, and Dorset Council is the Lead Local Flood Authority, having replaced the District Councils of West Dorset and Weymouth and Portland in 2020 when they became Dorset Council Unitary Authority  The Flood Risk Assessment for West Dorset, Weymouth and Portland aims to understand local flood risk across Dorset, manage the likelihood and impacts, help Dorset's communities manage their own flood risk and ensure flood risk is considered in managing local development proposals. It also produces a local flood risk management strategy.2  The strategy seeks to inform planning policies with regards to local flood risk management and to approve, adopt and maintain Sustainable Drainage systems (SuDS).

Dorset Council Strategic Flood Risk Assessment
The Dorset Council Strategic Flood Risk Assessment3 is a primary source of flood risk information when considering whether an area is appropriate for development. It echoes the

[2] . Local Flood Risk Management Strategy for Dorset (summary)
[3] https://www.dorsetcouncil.gov.uk/-/level-1-strategic-flood-risk-assessment-west-dorset-and-weymouth-portland

drainage hierarchy in national policy in that policies should steer development to areas of lower flood risk as far as possible and ensure that development in an area at risk of flooding would be safe for its lifetime taking account of climate change impacts.
The three main sources of flooding identified from the Strategic Flood Risk Assessment (SFRA) for this area are fluvial (River Bride), surface water and ground water. The rising sea level, as a fourth source of potential flooding, is not addressed in this paper.

Surface Water Flooding
The SFRA states: "Surface water flooding (or 'pluvial' flooding) is often caused by intense short duration rainfall, and usually occurs in lower lying areas, often where the natural (or artificial) drainage system is unable to accommodate the volume of water. Surface water flooding can be linked to issues of poor drainage, drainage blocked by debris, extreme weather, urban creep and sewer capacity. The Risk of Flooding from Surface Water predominantly follows topographic flow paths of existing watercourses and dry valleys. Overland flow routes occur on roads and some isolated ponding occurs in lower lying areas. There are also several flow routes shown along lower lying valleys in the topography. Within urban areas, there are properties and roads shown to be at risk from surface water flooding in the present day. It is likely that this will further increase due to increased rainfall intensities because of climate change. Risk of flooding from surface water may limit the development potential of some areas unless appropriate mitigation measures can be implemented. There may, however, be potential for future development to reduce the current level of risk shown throughout the area, either by reducing impermeable surfaces or providing storage for surface water flows."

Ground Water Flooding
The SFRA states: "Compared with other sources of flooding, current understanding of the risks posed by groundwater flooding is limited and mapping of flood risk from groundwater sources is in its infancy. Under the Flood and Water Management Act (2010), Local Lead Flood Authorities (LLFAs) have powers to undertake risk management functions in relation to groundwater flood risk. Groundwater level monitoring records are available for areas on Major Aquifers. However, for low lying valley areas, which can be susceptible to groundwater flooding caused by a high water-table in mudstones, clays and superficial alluvial deposits, very few records are available. Additionally, there is increased risk of groundwater flooding where long reaches of watercourses are culverted because of elevated groundwater levels not being able to naturally pass into watercourses and be conveyed to less susceptible areas"

Fluvial Flooding - The River Bride
The River Bride is one of the key watercourses identified in the Dorset Council Strategic Flood Risk Assessment as a source of fluvial flooding in the area. It is fed by chalk aquifers which tend to dampen the response unless heavy rainfall occurs following a period of prolonged wet weather. The River Bride rises near Littlebredy and flows in a westerly direction for approximately 16km before discharging into Lyme Bay near Burton Bradstock. The extent of flood risk from this watercourse is expected to increase because of climate change. Local

Flood management plans exist in relation to the River Bride in West Dorset. The implications for this Neighbourhood Plan are:

- Surface Water Management: Whilst neighbourhood plans cannot resolve this, it is helpful to incorporate measures to manage surface water run-off, particularly in areas around Burton Bradstock. (Burton Bradstock is where the River Bride discharges into the sea some 3 miles from the parish).
- Land Use and Management: Considerations for land use and management changes to reduce flood risk should be considered with any new development.
- Habitat Sensitivity: The plan should include strategies for managing rivers sensitively to protect local wildlife and habitats, particularly for water voles and the chalk stream habitat, and address sedimentation issues.

National Policy
The NPPF is changing at the time of writing:
Neighbourhood Plans should currently conform to national and local policies on flood risk. The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) December 2024 paragraph 170 states that "Inappropriate development in areas at risk of flooding should be avoided by directing development
away from areas at highest risk (whether existing or future). Where development is necessary in such areas, the development should be made safe for its lifetime without increasing flood risk elsewhere."4 Appendix 3 explanes the Sequential Test and the Exception Test used in this framework.

However, the Draft 2025 NPPF Framework has, for the first time, produced a standalone chapter for flood risk and coastal change5, rather than being part of a wider climate change section. The 2025 Draft NPPF Chapter 18 includes Plan-making Policies F1-F3 and National decision-making policies F4-F8 relating to flooding. Risk must be assessed through either the Sequential Test or a site-specific Flood Risk Assessment (FRA).
It clarifies that a sequential test is not required if a site-specific FRA can clearly demonstrate that no new development, access or egress would be in an area at risk from any source of flooding, now or in the future. " In Flood Zone 1, a site-specific flood risk assessment should inform and accompany all development proposals involving:
Sites of 1 hectare or more
Land which has been identified by the Environment Agency as having critical drainage problems
Land identified in a strategic flood risk assessment or the Flood Map for Planning6 at being of increased flood risk in future; or,

[4] National Planning Policy Framework - GOV.UK
[5] https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/697b71c52ff8d10a830d5d4a/Draft_NPPF_December_2025.pdf
[6] https://flood-map-for-planning.service.gov.uk/

Land subject to a current risk of flooding from any source, where its development would introduce a more vulnerable use than the existing one.

The sequential test should be used in areas known to be at risk now or in the future from any form of flooding other than for sites covered by a SSFRA or for the following types of development:
Householder development
Small non-residential extensions (footprint less than 250m2)
Changes of us (some exceptions)

There is also stronger policy on drainage with an explicit expectation that Suds will be addressed early in design, comply with the National Standards for Suds, and contribute meaningfully to flood risk management. Sustainable Drainage Systems should be designed in accordance with National Standards7 This new overarching policy guidance will be applied in the emerging Dorset Local Plan expected by the end of 2026. The current West Dorset Policy is listed below:

West Dorset Policy
Flooding is addressed in the 2015 West Dorset Local Plan (the current adopted local plan) so that any development takes account of this through planning policies:

| Policy name | Policy summary<br>2015 West Dorset Local Plan |
|---|---|
| ENV5 FLOOD RISK | New development or the intensification of existing uses should be planned to avoid risk of flooding (from surface water run-off, groundwater, fluvial and coastal sources) where possible. The risk of flooding will be minimised by:<br>• steering development towards the areas of lowest risk and avoiding inappropriate development in the higher flood risk zones.<br>• ensuring development will not generate flooding through surface water run-off and/or exacerbate flooding elsewhere. |
| ENV2 WILDLIFE AND HABITATS | In other locations, including locally identified wildlife sites and waterbodies, where significant harm to nature conservation interests cannot be avoided, it should be mitigated. Where it cannot be avoided or adequately mitigated, compensation will result in the maintenance or enhancement of biodiversity otherwise development will not be permitted. Features of nature conservation interest should be safeguarded by development. |

[7] https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/national-standards-for-sustainable-drainage-systems/national-standards-for-sustainable-drainage-systems-suds#introduction

Planning Applications to Dorset Council must meet rigorous national and local requirements with regard to flood risk assessment[8]. These are outlined in Appendix 5.

Sustainable Drainage Systems

Figure 3.8: The Drainage Hierarchy

| | |
|---|---|
| 1 | **Stores surface water runoff for reuse within the development site;** |
| 2 | **Attenuates surface water runoff in ponds, open water features or bio-retention systems within the development site for gradual discharge and:**<br>a. uses infiltration techniques which allow surface water runoff to soak into the ground;<br>b. discharges surface water runoff to a surface water body;<br>c. discharges surface water runoff to a surface water sewer or other drainage system;<br>d. discharges surface water runoff to a combined sewer. |
| 3 | **Attenuates runoff by storing in tanks, or sealed water features, for gradual discharge and:**<br>a. uses infiltration techniques which allow runoff to soak into the ground;<br>b. discharges runoff to a surface water body;<br>c. discharges runoff to a surface water sewer or other drainage system;<br>d. discharges runoff to a combined sewer |

Figure 5 The drainage hierarchy (source: Dorset Council Emerging Local Plan, consultation version 2021, pages 122).

Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDS) are a mitigation method to lower the risk of flooding. They mimic natural drainage patterns to manage rainfall and surface water runoff close to the source. They manage the transport of water and the speed that it runs off hard surfaces before it enters watercourses. SuDs can be designed to store water and control infiltration into the ground to allow for evaporation and transpiration9. The figure below shows the types of SuDs.

[8] https://www.dorsetcouncil.gov.uk/documents/d/guest/new-validation-checklist-v17-final-updated-19-09-2024

[9] Following the floods of 2007, Defra and the Dept for Communities and Local Government commissioned the report "Delivering Sustainable Drainage Systems" (Defra/DCLG, 2014) https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/399995/RFI7086_sud_consult_doc_final.pdf

Figure 3.7: Types of SuDS

| SuDS type | Description |
|---|---|
| Rainwater harvesting | Measures to collect rainwater which falls on roofs and other paved surfaces so that it can be re-used |
| Soakaways/infiltration | Areas designed to allow water to pass into the ground rather than flow across the ground |
| Green roofs | Planted layer of soil on a building's roof to help reduce rates of runoff |
| Permeable paving | Areas of hardstanding that allow for the permeation of surface water into the ground below |
| Bio-retention systems | Collection of runoff, allowing temporary ponding, and filtering through vegetation and underlying soils |
| Trees | Supporting evapotranspiration and enhancing biodiversity and shade |
| Swales/detention & infiltration basins/ponds/wetlands | Areas that slow runoff from a site by storing water as well as treating water and enhancing biodiversity |

Figure 6 Types of SUDs (source: Dorset Council Emerging Local Plan Consultation Version 2021, pages 120).

Relevance for neighbourhood plans

The Neighbourhood Plan should incorporate evidence from the community to provide safe, sensible and sustainable development that prevents flooding by providing knowledge about local historic flooding. Any development in those areas should mitigate against existing flood problems and potential future flooding, rather than intensifying an existing problem through poorly planned development.10

Key stakeholders in the preparation of flooding policies for the area
Dorset Council (Lead Local Planning Authority and Lead Local Flood Authority)
The Environment Agency – Flood Wessex Team
The Parish Council
Local Businesses including Farms
Local Community
Natural England
Dorset Wildlife Trust
Wessex Water

Engagement with residents carried out for the 3 Villages Plan
Flooding has been raised as a concern by residents and businesses. The issue was flagged by 68% of respondents in the questionnaire at the Community Drop-in Session in April 2024

[10] https://www.floodtoolkit.com/pdfs/22.%20Neighbourhood%20planning/22.Neighbourhood-planning.pdf

(See Appendix 2). Comments related to land drainage and surface water issues in all three villages, although fluvial flooding also impacts the road along the Bride Valley. The River Bride flows to the north of Puncknowle and, on occasion, has made the road impassable to Litton Cheney and Burton Bradstock. Problems also arise when groundwater, surface water and watercourses are overwhelmed by intense downpours, making local roads impassable, putting private properties at risk of flooding and potentially compromising foul drainage systems.

| 3 Villages community engagement | Relevant Feedback |
|---|---|
| Presentations in the Village Hall on 13 May 2023 were attended by 43 people. | There was a strong desire to protect and enhance the environment and sustain the rural character of the landscape. There was interest in integrated approaches to land management, exploring renewable energy and enhancing our resilience to climate change. |
| Drop-in sessions 2-3 November 2023 | Comments were made about management of water – from fields onto roads, especially the Coast Road and close to people's houses. |
| Community Drop-In session 20 April 2024 with 51 participants in the Village Hall | Highlighted that Flooding and water management are of key importance to residents. |
| Business Survey April 2024 | Water management is a significant concern, with a number of areas increasingly affected by flooding as an apparent indication of climate change. |

Figure 7 On 31 October 2021 nearly 4 inches of rain fell in two hours causing surface water flooding in the villages of Puncknowle, Swyre and West Bexington.

Table summarising the problems identified by the Community

| Issue Raised | Mitigated by |
|---|---|
| Surface water affecting access roads to the villages | Slowing the flow of water running off land onto roads and highways. |
| Surface Water affecting residential roads such as Chicks Bridge on the Litton Road | Current drainage pipes and gullies kept clear of blockages.<br>Attenuation of river in spate |
| Groundwater affecting roads or properties | Ditches maintained |
| Culverts, ditches and natural waterways unable to cope after a deluge | Ditches maintained |

Local flooding infrastructure

Surface water management, combined foul and surface water sewer systems and wastewater treatment are the responsibility of Wessex Water. In May 2023, they published their first Drainage and Wastewater Management Plan11 to look at the levels of investment needed to provide these services effectively and in line with national standards through to 2030.

Wessex Water undertook a £800,000 investment in 2023 to protect Dorset's historic Jurassic Coast by cutting the discharge of untreated stormwater near Chesil Beach. They built a new pipeline to pump wastewater away from the villages of West Bexington and Swyre, helping to protect the beach which lies on the UNESCO World Heritage Site coastline. The rising main sewer now stretches for nearly a mile between sewage pumping stations at West Bexington and Gorselands, near Swyre, and will increase sewer capacity and help to cope with sudden increases in water volume caused by heavy rainfall.  Despite this positive investment, like

[11] wessex-dwmp-customer-summary-report.pdf

most villages in the country, a lot of the infrastructure that takes surface water away is ageing and unlikely to be replaced unless further projects occur such as this.

At Chicks Bridge there is a Wessex Water pumping station where prolonged discharges occur from a storm drain when ground water levels are high, typically during the winter months. In addition to this the road becomes impassable due to flooding.

Figure 8 The Road at Chicks Bridge impassable to traffic in heavy rain.

In times of high rainfall, groundwater and surface water can infiltrate the sewer system with the potential for environmental impact. As a result of monitoring for this, Wessex Water are seeking to install a nature-based solution12 at Chicks Bridge. They plan to install continuous Water Quality Monitoring at the site to coincide with the nature-based solution being put in place. Whilst there are no plans to attenuate the flow, they plan to reduce the number of spills be sealing pipework ahead of installing the nature-based solution. The nature-based

[12] https://corporate.wessexwater.co.uk/our-purpose/increased-biodiversity/nature-based-solutions

solution will consist of a reed bed which is currently expected for 2029, which will ensure that discharges are treated.

The Countryside Stewardship Scheme (CSS) is part of the government's Environmental Management offer under which farms can apply for grants towards sustainable practices and aims at protecting the environment. This includes planting crops to prevent water run-off from the land and so alleviate flooding. Farms can also benefit from nutrient neutrality water market payments in designated areas, though policy on this is under review.

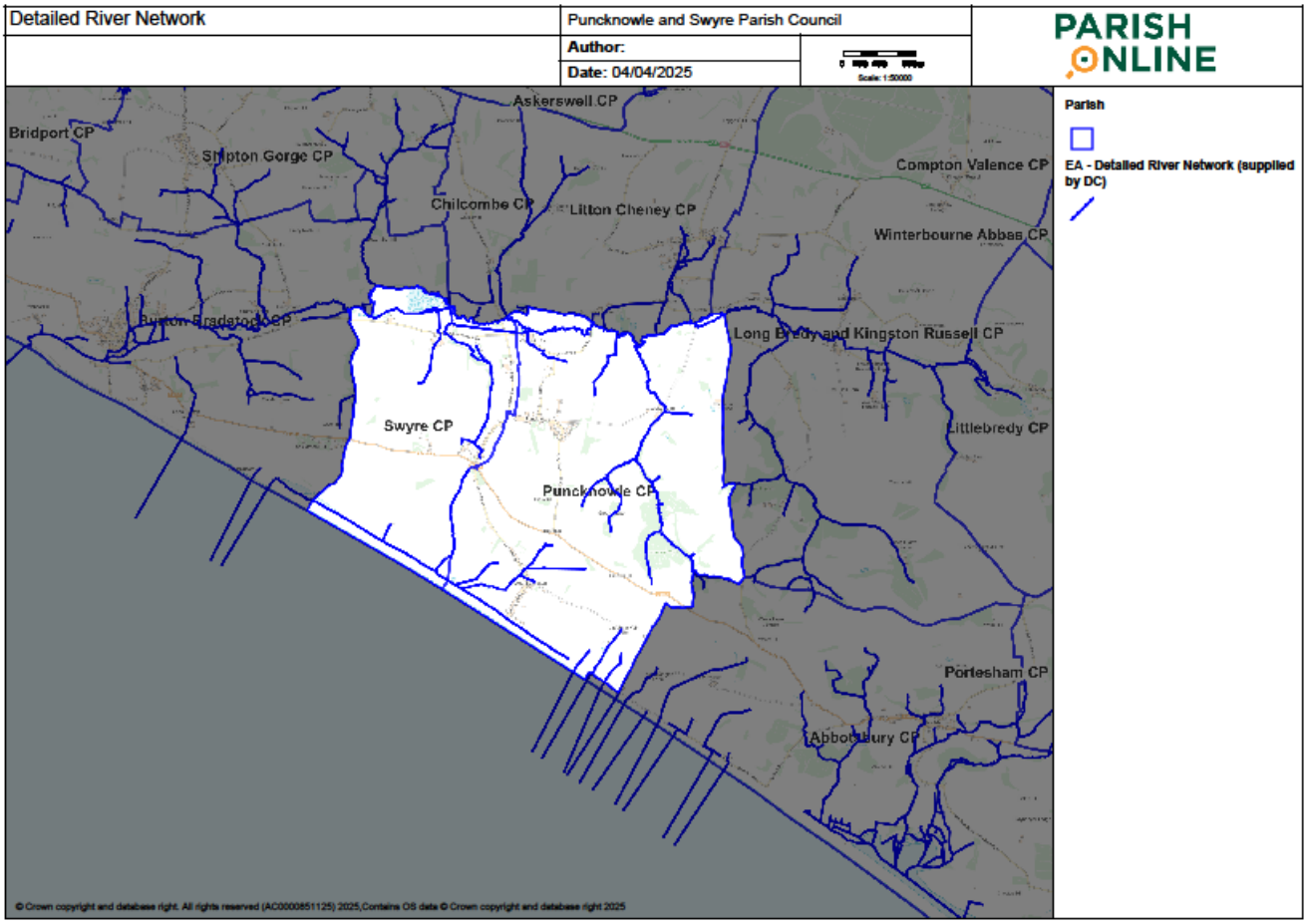


Figure 9 The Detailed River Network for Puncknowle, Swyre, West Bexington and surrounding areas

West Dorset Catchment Flood Management Plan

The Environment Agency's West Dorset Catchment Flood Management Plan (CFMP) 13 Summary Report of June 2012 gives an overview of the flood risk in the West Dorset catchment. The CFMP considers all types of inland flooding, from rivers, groundwater, surface

[13] _CFMP_West Dorset_6

water and tidal flooding, but not flooding directly from the sea. There are several sources of flood risk within the West Dorset catchment, including fluvial, surface water, and tidal flooding. Fluvial flood risk is associated with the Rivers Char, Brit, Bride and Wey. Over half of all properties at risk and economic damages due to flooding are in Bridport. There are also a significant number of properties at risk in Beaminster, Burton Bradstock, and Nottington in the Weymouth area. Page 23 outlines the West Dorset Rural Areas, and in 2012 it defined the flood risk in the area as low, in general from small watercourses. The report did not foresee a significant increase in flood risk in the future and placed it in their Policy Option 1 which is to monitor and advise. This does not account for future development.
In 2024 Dorset National Landscape secured funding for a project across the Brit catchment that aims to reduce the flood risk in Beaminster, Netherbury and Bridport, working with the Environment Agency, an independent geomorphologist and Dorset Wildlife Trust to identify high-risk fields where run off could cause problems, and working with landowners to overcome these problems. Dorset Council's Flood Risk Management Team have also been working alongside the Farming and Wildlife Advisory Group (FWAG) and the Environment Agency to tackle flooding in high-risk communities.14

Flooding and the Environment

Nutrient pollution is a big environmental issue for many of our most important places for nature in England. In freshwater habitats and estuaries, increased levels of nutrients (especially nitrogen and phosphorus) can speed up the growth of certain plants, disrupting natural processes and impacting wildlife. This process (called 'eutrophication') damages these water dependent sites and harms the plants and wildlife that are meant to be there. In technical terms it can put sites in 'unfavourable condition'. The sources of excess nutrients are very site-specific but include sewage treatment works, septic tanks, livestock, arable farming and industrial processes.

Many of our most internationally important water dependent places (lakes, rivers, estuaries, etc) are designated as protected under the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 (as amended). Natural England has reviewed the available evidence on Habitats Sites that are in unfavourable condition due to high nutrient levels. Where plans or projects will contribute additional nutrients to these sites, then a robust Habitats Regulations Assessment is required in accordance with well-established principles. This may highlight the need for new solutions to inform sustainable development to protect these sites." 15

Development plans can be considered 'nutrient neutral' where they can demonstrate that they will cause no overall increase in nutrient pollution affecting specified Habitat Sites. Developers and or Local Planning Authorities should aim to deliver projects that demonstrate net zero increase in nutrient levels within the catchments of these Habitat Sites.
Suitable mitigation measures might include constructed wetlands, changes in land management or retrofitting Sustainable Urban Drainage systems within the catchment of the

[14] Brit Catchment NFM Project | Dorset National Landscape
[15] c2185898-d871-443b-95bb-cdae5d937904

impacted site(s). Any proposed development sites would need to be screened in proximity to these sites. For planning applications that directly or indirectly result in additional nutrient loading which would, alone or in combination, have a significant effect on sensitive sites (which are already unfavourable because of nutrients, or the development would make it unfavourable), an appropriate assessment is needed. 'Nutrient neutrality' is one approach which can be used to mitigate harmful impacts. Potential sites would need to be considered in terms of their proximity to these areas.

Key takeaways and how it shapes direction

Summary of findings

1. Neighbourhood plans should align with broader catchment flood management strategies and work in collaboration with local authorities and environmental agencies. The new Draft NPPF 2025 provides more clarity about stringent flood risk assessment for new development. This overarching national policy will inform guidance and local plan policy and cover general concerns that:
   Development should avoid areas at high risk of flooding or of increasing flood risk elsewhere.
   Development must not adversely affect protected habitat sites through increased nutrient pollution and should mitigate against this.

2. The new NPPF places a strong requirement upon including SuDS in development plans:
   No further policy is needed within the neighbourhood plan however it can recommend that small householder developments and extensions:
   - maximise the use of "natural" SuDS features, including swales, streams, storage ponds and reed beds.
   - Promote water efficiency in new development by incorporating rainwater harvesting technology.
   - Promote tree planting, street trees and green roofs where appropriate through new development.

3. Considerations for land use and management changes to reduce flood risk should be integrated into Neighbourhood Plans where possible.

Emerging Draft Policies

- The new Draft NPPF 2025 provides more clarity about stringent flood risk assessment for new development. This overarching national policy will inform guidance and local plan policy. No policy needed.

- The new NPPF places a strong requirement upon including SuDS in development plans, therefore no further policy is needed within the neighbourhood plan.

Action Points Falling outside the Neighbourhood Plan to take further.

| | Action | Who by | How |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | Advise the Parish Council that Community Infrastructure Levy funds can be spent on local infrastructure, such as creating or enhancing existing flood management | N Plan SG | Work with Dorset Council Consider possible Grants for projects from Wessex Water Community Fund. https://www.wessexwater.co.uk/in-your-community/community-fund |
| 2 | New (and existing) homeowners should be made aware of their responsibilities even where a watercourse runs behind their fence; most people are unaware of their responsibilities as riparian owners. 16 See Appendix 4 re riparian ownership and a specific local ditch raised by Wessex Water | Parish Council | Awareness Campaign through Newsletter and Website |
| 3 | Advise the Parish Council to make residents aware of the sources of flooding and good practices to alleviate this. | Parish Council | Awareness Campaign through Newsletter and Website |

[16] River (fluvial) flooding | Local Government Association.

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| 4 | Work with the Community to explore actions to reduce the vulnerability to flooding and increase its resilience through:<br>• Monitoring for blocked gullies and ditches<br>to keep surface water drainage systems working.<br>• Encourage residents to register with the Environment Agency's Flood line which provides flood warnings by phone, text or email: www.gov.uk/sign-up-for-flood-warnings.<br>• In high-risk areas, develop a community flood plan that you can put into action in the event of a flood. This could be developed in co-ordination with the Environment Agency and with the emergency planning officer at Dorset Council: www.bit.ly/flood-guidance-groups. | Parish Council | Awareness Campaign through Newsletter and Website |
| 5 | Work with landowners and statutory bodies to promote the management of upland areas in your catchment to slow down the flow of flood waters before they reach vulnerable communities downstream. | Parish Council | Assignment to investigate and lobby appropriate bodies |

Glossary

| | |
|---|---|
| CFMP | Catchment Flood Management Plan |
| CSS | Countryside Stewardship Scheme |
| DLUHC | Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities (Now called the Ministry of Housing, Communities & Local Government |
| FRA | Flood Risk Assessment |
| FWAG | Farming and Wildlife Advisory Group |
| LLFA | Lead Local Flood Authority |
| NPPF | National Planning Policy Framework |
| RAMSAR | wetlands of national importance. |
| SFRA | Strategic Flood Risk Assessment |
| SSSI | A site of Special Scientific Interest is a formal conservation designation. Used for areas of particular interest to science due to rare species of fauna or flora. |
| SuDS | Sustainable Drainage Systems |
| Swale | Swale drains are broad, shallow ditches that can be lined with grass, vegetation, or rocks. It's a more natural way to help drain yards to prevent flooding, puddling, and erosion. |
| UNESCO | The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation |
| | |

Appendix 1
Exploring local vulnerability
Neighbourhood planning introduces the opportunity to explore the vulnerability of our local community to the effects of climate change and see what opportunities are available to increase our community's resilience, starting with the following questions:

| Question | Author's Remarks |
|---|---|
| Does our area suffer from local flooding problems, and is it clear what the root causes are? (e.g. houses built on a flood plain, rivers overwhelmed by heavy rain, loss of green space including paving over of front gardens). | Fluvial Flooding affects roads especially in the Bride Valley where the River Bride can flood the valley road east of Puncknowle at Chicks Bridge and west of Puncknowle at Burton Bradstock, affecting access to the villages. Surface water and ground water flooding are the main sources of risk for residential roads and the Coast Road. |
| Are there specific areas where surface water drainage is inadequate or sometimes overwhelmed? | Residential roads in all three villages have been affected in the past. |
| Does your area suffer from water stress and over-abstraction? Do streams and rivers disappear in the summer? | Not so much although long dry spells affect the ability of clay soil to absorb high intensity rainfall. |
| If your area is coastal, will it be vulnerable to sea level rise in the coming decades? | Tidal flood risk is generally fairly low in West Dorset, Weymouth and Portland, with tidal Flood Zones mostly limited to areas along the seafront. Climate change projections indicate that sea level rise could result in a 1 in 200-year tide level of 3.6-4.4mAOD by 2133 and a 1 in 1000-year tide level of 3.7-4.6mAOD. This may impact low lying areas along the seafront. (see Level 1 SFRA Report West Dorset, 2017) |
| Does new development incorporate sufficient landscaping? | Could be considered |
| Could new developments incorporate green roofs and walls? | Could be considered |
| What could new developments do to reduce water use and reduce surface water flooding? | Maximising the use of "natural" SuDS features. |

Neighbourhood plan policy: flooding, extreme weather and water conservation:
Potential topics for policies:
• Maximising the use of “natural” SuDS features, including swales, streams, storage ponds and reed beds. These natural systems manage flood risk and can also secure other objectives, such as providing additional public open space integrated with cycling and walking routes, providing additional habitat, and contributing to the character of the new “place”. Too often, SuDS schemes consist of underground concrete boxes to store rainwater. These do reduce flood risk by releasing rainwater slowly, but deliver none of these other benefits
. • Promoting water efficiency in new development by incorporating rainwater harvesting technology. • Promoting tree planting, street trees and green roofs through new development.

Community Infrastructure Levy funds can be spent on local infrastructure, such as creating or enhancing existing flood management.

Source CSE (2020).

Appendix 2
Community Feedback
At the Drop-in session in November 2023
Feedback from Swyre Residents:

> (Swyre needs) Maintaining ditches around fields to prevent (water) run off as it is bad in Bull Lane.
>
> Swyre needs to be protected especially from cloudburst rainstorms which overwhelm the ditches and streams. Recent advice from the Department of the Environment about changing ploughing practice and building reservoirs to hold storm overflow etc should be implemented.
>
> There is too much water run-off from land drainage coming onto the coast road.

At the Community Drop-in Session in April 2024
One of the findings was that flooding and water management is of key importance to residents.
Flooding was flagged by 68% of respondents in the questionnaire. This is perhaps not too surprising after a wet winter that particularly affected the Bride Valley, but the concerns were reinforced by the comments. Indeed, this section of the questionnaire given at the end of the session had more comments than any other, with every person providing comment.
Some of the main themes were:
The necessity of keeping ditches and drains clear.
The concerns of water run-off from higher elevation fields (with ploughing along the contours identified as an important mitigation).
Several common sites were identified where flooding was a persistent issue.
Puncknowle: Looke Lane, Rectory Lane, Village Hall, Litton Cheney Road, Hoopers Lane, Knacker's Hole, Church Street.
Swyre: Coast Road near the old Bull pub, by Manor Farm and church.
West Bexington: Swyre Road, Donkey Lane, Beach and chalet gardens.

Appendix 3

The Sequential Test and Exception Test
NPPF 2024 paragraphs 170-182 The Sequential Test and the Exception Test[17]

The Sequential Test
"The Sequential Test ensures that a sequential approach is followed to steer new development to areas with the lowest probability of flooding. The flood zones, as refined in the Strategic Flood Risk Assessment for the area, provide the basis for applying the Test. The aim is to steer new development to Flood Zone 1 (areas with a low probability of river or sea flooding). Where there are no reasonably available sites in Flood Zone 1, local planning authorities in their decision making should take into account the flood risk vulnerability of land uses and consider reasonably available sites in Flood Zone 2 (areas with a medium probability of river or sea flooding), applying the Exception Test if required. Only where there are no reasonably available sites in Flood Zones 1 or 2 should the suitability of sites in Flood Zone 3 (areas with a high probability of river or sea flooding) be considered, taking into account the flood risk vulnerability of land uses and applying the Exception Test if required". Within each flood zone, surface water and other sources of flooding also need to be taken into account in applying the sequential approach to the location of development. (National Planning Practice Guidance, paragraph 019)

The Exception Test
"The Exception Test, as set out in paragraph 102 of the NPPF, is a method to demonstrate and help ensure that flood risk to people and property will be managed satisfactorily, while allowing necessary development to go ahead in situations where suitable sites at lower risk of flooding are not available. Essentially, the two parts to the Test require proposed development to show that it will provide wider sustainability benefits to the community that outweigh flood risk, and that it will be safe for its lifetime, without increasing flood risk elsewhere and where possible reduce flood risk overall.". (National Planning Practice Guidance, paragraph 023.

Following the Draft 2025 NPPF in December, more clarity has been provided around the application of the Sequential Test

[17] National Planning Policy Framework

Appendix 4

Stakeholder
The Environment Agency

From: Wessex Enquiries
Date: 2 June 2025 at 10:46:02 BST

Our Ref: GE41767

Dear Sally

Please find our response to your enquiry below.

Thank you very much for your enquiry regarding Environment Agency projects in your area. At present, there are no planned works along the River Bride in your Parish.

In order to help the process of data gathering for your paper, I can refer you to the Check the long term flood risk for an area in England - GOV.UK website which will give you access to the publicly available maps for areas of flood risk that include allowances for Climate change.

I can also point you towards the guidance for Neighbourhood Plans that relate to flood risk: https://www.gov.uk/guidance/flood-risk-and-coastal-change/#para15

Once you have your neighbourhood plan completed and would like engagement from the Environment Agency, please email Sustainable Places, Wessex. wx.sp@environment-agency.gov.uk

We trust this response answers your enquiry. Should you require further information please contact us again at wessexenquiries@environment-agency.gov.uk

Kind regards

Corinne Moyse
Wessex Enquiries – Customer & Engagement

Stakeholder
Wessex Water
On 23 Apr 2025, at 11:26, Wessex Water wrote:

…I can confirm following recent rising main and pumping station upgrades, infiltration sealing, and surface water separation work within West Bexington, we do not have any further projects proposed within this catchment.

In terms of advice for your plan, and from experience of working in this catchment, therefore this is only my opinion, it would be worth including a section on sustainable drainage systems to manage surface water runoff effectively. These can include permeable surfaces, and rain gardens for example.

Watercourse management may also be a point of focus. There is an existing ditch running east to west adjacent to the beach car park which is consistently blocked and floods surrounding land. Maintenance falls under riparian ownership, therefore it would be worth engaging with landowners in an attempt to remind them of their responsibilities.

I include the following link The Community Fund | Wessex Water which will take you to Wessex Water's community funding page. I believe the window of opportunity is now closed but will reopen again towards the end of the year. Please read as this may be useful when planning a project within West Bexington.

Please do let me know if you have any further questions.

Thank you

Best Regards,

Project Manager – Design & Build South

Appendix 5
Extract from Dorset Planning Application Validation Checklist

Flood risk assessments, sequential and exception tests
When it's required
For all applications*, a site-specific flood risk assessment (FRA) will be required for the following development proposals:
• development on a site in Flood Zone 2 or 3 including householder, minor development and change of use;
• development on a site with an area of 1 hectare or more in a Flood Zone 1;
• development on sites less than 1 ha in Flood Zone 1 where the application site could be affected by other sources of flooding including:
I. a risk of surface water flooding – where that risk is medium (1 in 100 year) or high (1 in 30 year), and/or,
II. a risk of ground water flooding where ground water levels are within 0 to 0.025m of the ground surface or are between 0.025m to 0.5m below the ground surface. Within these zones there may be a risk of ground water emergence at the surface leading to flooding to both surface and subsurface assets as identified on the Ground Water Susceptibility to Flooding layer, and/or
III. a risk of ground water flooding as identified on the Environment Agency's Groundwater Warning Zone 2019 and/or
IV. V. flooding from surface water drains and/or
reservoirs – where 'dry day,' 'wet day' and 'fluvial contribution' scenarios apply as defined on Environment Agency mapping.
• development in areas identified in a strategic flood risk assessment as being at increased flood risk in future;
• in an area within flood zone 1 which has critical drainage problems as notified by the Environment Agency;
• development that includes culverting or control of flow of any river or stream;
• development (including boundary walls etc.) within 8 metres of the top of a bank of a Main River or Flood Defence Scheme.

Summary of Secondary Sources of Data

| Level | Date | Author | Document Name | Summary | Link |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Local | 2012 | Environment Agency | Overview of total flood risk excluding coastal flooding in the West Dorset Catchment | Sets long term policy for this area which is to monitor and review (lowest level of risk). | https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/5a7c4173ed915d7d70d1d9ea/West_Dorset_Catchment_Flood_Management_Plan.pdf |
| National | 2014 | Defra and DCLG | Delivering Sustainable Drainage Systems | Options for sustainable drainage systems maintenance and the funding options which could support them. | https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/399995/RFI7086_sud_consult_doc_final.pdf |
| County | 2015 | Northamptonshire County Council Flooding Tool Kit | Advice for Neighbourhood Planning | Incorporate evidence from the community and ensure development mitigates existing and potential future problems | https://www.floodtoolkit.com/pdfs/22.%20Neighbourhood%20planning/22.Neighbourhood-planning.pdf |
| County | 2015 | Dorset Council | Summary Document for Local Flood Risk Strategy | Understand and manage the impacts of flooding. Help local communities and ensure risk is considered in local development. | https://www.dorsetcouncil.gov.uk/documents/35024/280970/Local+Flood+Risk+Management+Strategy+for+Dorset+%28summary%29.pdf/31513314-3ae5-265d-2399-d49f20b91b42?version=1.0&t=1619388858701 |
| County | 2018 | West Dorset and Portland & | Level 1 Strategic Flood | Dorset Council has since become the Lead Local Authority. | https://www.dorsetcouncil.gov.uk/-/level-1-strategic-flood-risk- |

| | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | Weymouth District Councils | Risk Assessment | This aims to understand flood risk and impact across Dorset. | assessment-west-dorset-and-weymouth-portland |
| National | 2020 | Centre for Sustainable Energy | A guide to policy writing and community engagement for low-carbon neighbourhood plans. | Policies need to factor in the effect of climate change on flooding Explores the vulnerability of our local community to the effects of climate change and see what opportunities are available to increase our community's resilience. Community Engagement is needed to provide local knowledge. There are actions which can be undertaken by residents to reduce vulnerability to flooding and increase resilience. | https://neighbourhoodplanning.org/wp-content/uploads/CSE-neighbourhood-planning-in-a-climate-emergency-feb-2020.pdf |
| County | 2021 | Dorset Council | Emerging Local Plan (Consultation Version) | Flooding topic and Diagrams of Suds and Drainage Hierarchy. | https://www.dorsetcouncil.gov.uk/documents/35024/285538/DCLP-Jan-2021-DorsetCouncilLocalPlan-vol1.pdf/7e0ff0f0-426f-523d-bd45-cc1fe4d60fac |
| National | 2022 | Joint paper by Natural England, Defra and The Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities (DLUHC) | From Nutrient Pollution -A non-technical summary of nutrient neutrality for water quality. | Increased nutrient levels cause eutrophication of freshwater habitats. Where sites are already in unfavourable condition, extra wastewater from new housing developments can | https://www.dorsetcouncil.gov.uk/documents/35024/2469021/Nutrient+Neutrality+-+a+summary+guide.pdf/c2185898-d871-443b-95bb-cdae5d937904 |

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|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | | | make matters worse and undermine ongoing efforts to recover these sites. However, when development is designed alongside suitable mitigation* measures, that additional damage can often be avoided. | |
| County | 2022 | Dorset Council | Planning Applications National and Local Requirements | Provides the information requirements for planning applications | https://www.dorsetcouncil.gov.uk/documents/d/guest/new-validation-checklist-v17-final-updated-19-09-2024 |
| Regional | 2023 | Wessex Water | Drainage and Wastewater Management Plan | Responsible for surface water management, combined foul and surface water sewer systems and wastewater treatment | https://corporate.wessexwater.co.uk/media/u3jevrue/wessex-dwmp-customer-summary-report.pdf |
| Local | 2024 | Dorset National Landscape | NFM project across the catchment for the River Brit | Aims top reduce the flood risk in Beaminster, Netherbury and Bridport | https://dorset-nl.org.uk/brit-nfm-project/ |
| National | 2025 | Local Government Association | Watercourses and Riparian Ownership | Advice on watercourses | https://www2.local.gov.uk/topics/severe-weather/flooding/flood-and-coastal-erosion-risk-management/river-fluvial-flooding |
| National | 2024 | MHCLG | NPPF Paragraphs 170-182 (The Sequential Test and the Exception Test) | A sequential approach is used to steer development towards areas with the lowest probability of flooding. Surface water and other sources of flooding need to be taken into account. The | https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/675abd214cbda57cacd3476e/NPPF-December-2024.pdf |

| | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | | | exception test is used to show that development provides sustainable benefits that outweigh the risks for its lifetime without increasing flood risk elsewhere. | |
| National | 2025 | MHCLG | Draft NPPF pages 82-86 Managing Flood Risk and Coastal Change | New Draft National Planning Policy Framework provides further clarity and rigour in reducing and managing flood risk… | https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/697b71c52ff8d10a830d5d4a/Draft_NPPF_December_2025.pdf |