

Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) for the Norton St Philip Neighbourhood Plan

SEA Scoping Report

Norton St Philip Parish Council

May 2024

Table of Contents

1. Introduction	1
2. Context	4
3. Air quality	8
4. Biodiversity and geodiversity.....	11
5. Climate change and flood risk.....	19
6. Community wellbeing.....	29
7. Historic environment	39
8. Land, soil and water resources	43
9. Landscape	50
10. Transportation and movement	56
11. Proposed SEA framework.....	61
12. Next Steps	64

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Quality Information

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Revision History

Revision	Revision date	Details	Name	Position
V1	20.04.2024	Draft for internal review	IK	Senior Environmental Planner
V2	24.04.2024	Draft for client review	GR	NP Steering Group
V3	01.05.2024	Consultation report	IK	Senior Environmental Planner

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1. Introduction

Background

- 1.1 AECOM has been commissioned to undertake an independent Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) in support of the emerging Norton St Philip Neighbourhood Plan. The Norton St Philip Neighbourhood Plan (NP) is being prepared under the Localism Act 2011¹ and the Neighbourhood Planning (General) Regulations 2012², and in the context of the local planning framework of Somerset Council.
- 1.2 The neighbourhood area (see **Figure 1.1** below) covers the parish of Norton St Philip, and includes the settlements of Norton St Philip and Farleigh Hungerford.

SEA explained

- 1.3 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 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, SEA seeks to maximise the emerging plan's contribution to sustainable development.
- 1.4 SEA is undertaken to meet the specific requirements prescribed by the Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations 2004 (the SEA Regulations)³.
- 1.5 The Norton St Philip NP has been screened in as requiring SEA⁴. This is predominantly due to the scope of the plan, which proposed to allocate land for additional homes with the potential to lead to a range of environmental effects. SEA is therefore required to assess the potential for significant environmental effects.
- 1.6 The next stage of SEA (this report) seeks to establish a suggested scope for the assessment. A key procedural requirement 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 UK Government (2011): [Localism Act 2011](#)

² UK Government (2012): [The Neighbourhood Planning \(General\) Regulations 2012](#)

³ UK Government (2004): [The Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations 2004](#)

⁴ Confirmation of SEA being required for the Norton St Philip Neighbourhood Plan was received by the Parish Council in December 2023.

Norton St Philip - Parish Boundary

PSMA License Number 100053175

Scale 1:37000

Notes:

Compiled by on 3 April 2018

MENDIP
DISTRICT COUNCIL
Cannards Grave Rd
Shepton Mallet
Somerset BA4 5BT
Tel: 0300 303 8588
Fax: 01749 344050

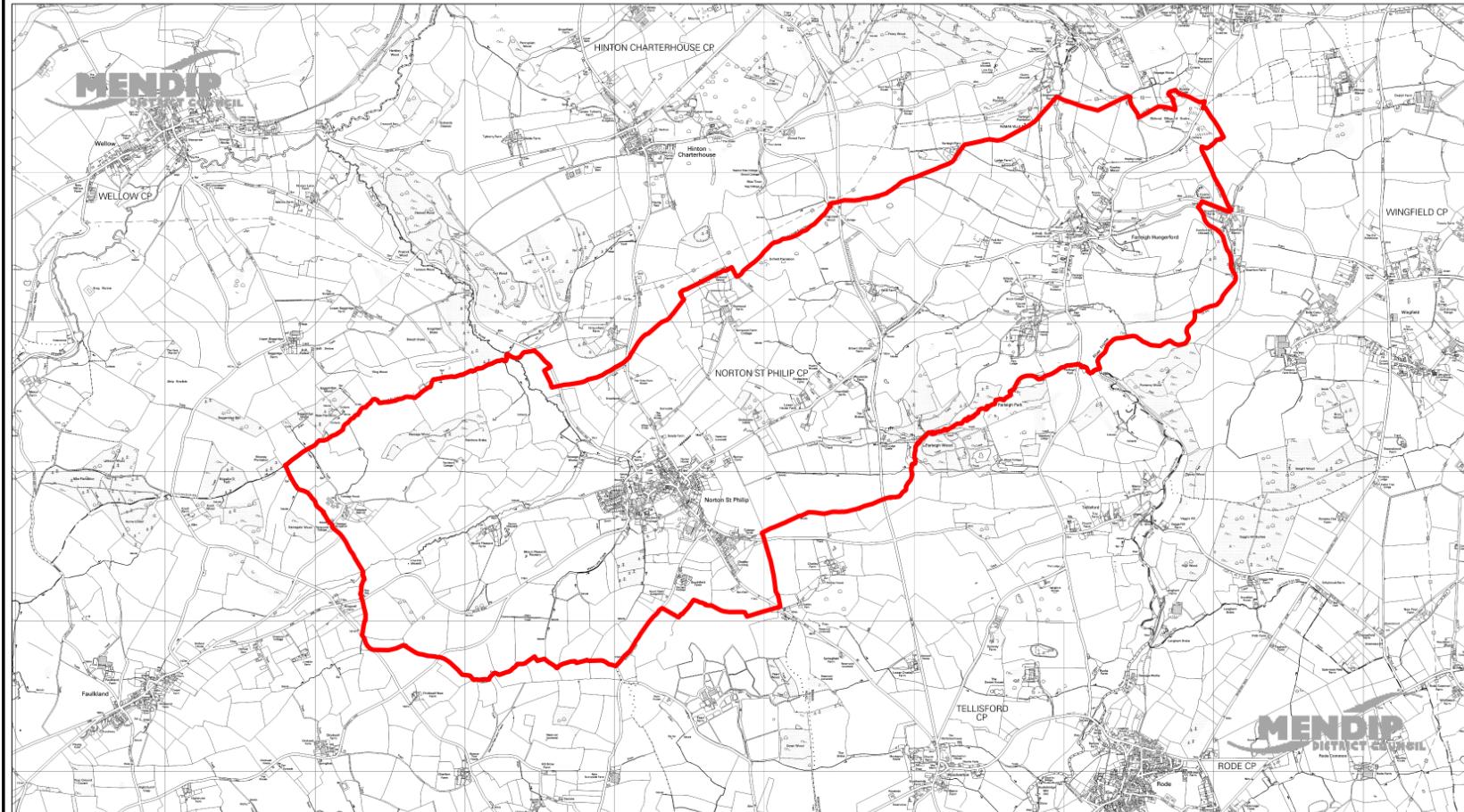


Figure 1.1: Norton St Philip neighbourhood area (source: former Mendip District Council)

SEA scoping explained

- 1.7 The scope is explored and presented under a series of key environmental themes as follows:
- Air quality
 - Biodiversity and geodiversity
 - Climate change and flood risk
 - Community wellbeing
 - Historic environment
 - Land, soil and water resources
 - Landscape
 - Transportation and movement
- 1.8 The selected environmental themes incorporate the 'SEA topics' suggested by Annex I (f) of the SEA Directive⁵. These were refined to reflect a broad understanding of the anticipated scope of plan effects.
- 1.9 Developing the draft scope for the SEA as presented in this report has involved the following steps:
- i. Exploring the policy context for the emerging Norton St Philip NP and SEA to summarise the key messages arising. Overarching plans and strategic policy context are presented in Chapter 2 (as part of the context for the plan, whilst localised plans and strategies are explored under each environmental theme).
 - ii. Establishing the baseline for the SEA (i.e., the current and future situation in the area) to help identify key sensitive receptors. Following a series of maps, key statistics, and cited evidence sources, a narrative summarises the baseline for each environmental theme. The future baseline (in the absence of the plan) is explored in Chapter 2 (as part of the context for the plan).
 - iii. Identifying particular problems or opportunities ('issues') that should be a particular focus of the SEA. Key issues are explored for each environmental theme; and
 - iv. 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. Objectives are explored for each environmental theme scoped in as part of the assessment, and then brought together as a whole (the SEA framework) in Chapter 11.
- 1.10 Options and proposals within the emerging neighbourhood plan will be assessed consistently using this framework.

⁵ The SEA Directive (Directive 200142//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. Context

- 2.1 This section presents the strategic planning policy context provided by the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) and the local development framework of Somerset Council. It also identifies plans and strategies of distinct relevance to the interests of statutory consultees, and other broad national strategies of relevance. Finally, a narrative is provided which considers the future baseline.

Strategic policy context

Document title	Year of publication
National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)	2023
Planning practice guidance	2021
Mendip Local Plan Part 1 (LPP1)	2014

- 2.2 The NPPF provides an overarching framework for development in England. It sets out the government's planning policies for England and how these are expected to be applied. It is supported by Planning Practice Guidance (PPG), which is a suite of policy papers covering a broad range of topics, including SEA. Neighbourhood plans must be in general conformity with the NPPF.
- 2.3 The strategic policy context is also set by the Mendip Local Plan Part 1 (LPP1), which was adopted in 2014. This provides the strategic plan and policies for the neighbourhood area. LPP1 Core Policy 1 (Mendip Spatial Strategy) identifies Norton St Philip as a primary village, offering key community facilities and some employment opportunities. Table 8 in the LPP1 indicates that the indicative housing requirement of 45 new dwellings for the neighbourhood area has been met through completions and commitments.
- 2.4 In April 2023, the four district councils of Somerset came together to form the Somerset Council. The Somerset Council are in the process of preparing a new Local Plan to cover the unitary authority area.⁶

Historic England

Document title	Year of publication
Historic England Advice Note 11 (Second Edition): Neighbourhood Planning and the Historic Environment	2022
Historic England: Heritage and Climate Change	2022
National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)	2021
National Model Design Code	2021
The National Design Guide	2019
Historic England Advice Note 1: Conservation Area Appraisal Designation and Management	2019

⁶ Somerset Council (2023): [Somerset Local Plan](#)

<u>A Green Future: Our 25 Year Plan to Improve the Environment</u>	2018
<u>Historic England Good Practice Advice in Planning: The Setting of Heritage Assets</u>	2017
<u>Historic England Advice Note 8: Sustainability Appraisal (SA) and Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA)</u>	2016

- 2.5 Historic England champions England's heritage. 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 essential⁷.
- 2.6 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.

Natural England and the Environment Agency

Document title	Year of publication
<u>Green Infrastructure Planning and Design Guide</u>	2023
<u>UK Climate Change Risk Assessment</u>	2022
<u>Net Zero Strategy: Build Back Greener</u>	2021
<u>Environment Act</u>	2021
<u>National Model Design Code</u>	2021
<u>Changes to the Habitats Regulations 2017</u>	2021
<u>The National Design Guide</u>	2019
<u>A Green Future: Our 25 Year Plan to Improve the Environment</u>	2018
<u>Space for people: Targeting action for woodland access</u>	2017
<u>Natural England's Green Infrastructure Guidance</u>	2009

⁷ Historic England: Conservation Principles, Policies and Guidance

Document title	Year of publication
The Water Environment (Water Framework Directive) (England and Wales) Regulations	2017
Flood and Water Management Act 2010	2010
Climate Change Act 2008	2008

- 2.7 The interests of Natural England and the Environment Agency span a range of SEA themes, including landscape, biodiversity, land, soil, and water resources (including waste), community wellbeing, and climate change and flood risk. Key documents which link to these interests are outlined above.

Other national strategies

Document title	Year of publication
UK Climate Change Risk Assessment	2022
Decarbonising Transport: A Better, Greener Britain	2021
National Infrastructure Assessment	2021
Net Zero Strategy: Build Back Greener	2021
Waste Management Plan for England	2021
Blueprint for a resilient economy	2020
National Infrastructure Strategy	2020
Health Equity in England: The Marmot Review 10 Years On	2020
The UK Sixth Carbon Budget	2020
The Clean Air Strategy	2019
Future of Mobility: Urban Strategy	2019
Planning Practice Guidance	2019
Healthy High Streets	2018
The National Adaptation Programme and the Third Strategy for Climate Adaptation Reporting	2018
The Clean Growth Strategy	2017
UK plan for tackling roadside nitrogen dioxide concentrations	2017

Future baseline

- 2.8 In the context of SEA, there is a need to consider the future baseline. The future baseline is the expected continuation and / or evolution of aspects of the baseline, based on what we know today. The future baseline is inevitably uncertain and unpredictable.

- 2.9 In the future, development (housing, employment, and wider infrastructure) will continue to come forward without a neighbourhood plan. This will either be allocated through the Local Plan, or speculatively through the planning system. In this respect a 'business as usual' approach means that development in line with Local Plan policies and the NPPF is likely to continue as a natural evolution of the baseline.
- 2.10 In accepting a 'business as usual' approach, it is also accepted that increases in absolute carbon emissions are likely to continue (in the absence of strategic, including global, action). A focus is therefore paid to per capita emissions, whereby planning can influence root behaviours and support lifestyle changes which have a recognisable and measurable localised impact.
- 2.11 It is assumed that development would be delivered alongside suitable, and widely accepted, mitigation in line with Local Plan and national policies. This would include sustainable drainage systems, efficiency standards, sequential and exception testing etc. More recently, it is recognised that a biodiversity net gain standard (10%) is being embedded in development standards nationally.
- 2.12 Furthermore, it is recognised that assets are afforded a level of protection, according to their significance, through the planning system (with internationally and nationally designated features afforded greater weight in planning decisions). It is assumed that existing national and local planning and policy protections will remain in the future as a key consideration for the development management process.
- 2.13 These assumptions will be considered throughout the assessment process, whilst recognising that uncertainty remains, and a precautionary principle will still be required.

3. Air quality

- 3.1 This section seeks to summarise any air pollution issues, in particular: exceedances in air pollution / declared Air Quality Management Areas (AQMAs) and air quality issues associated with the main road network.

Maps

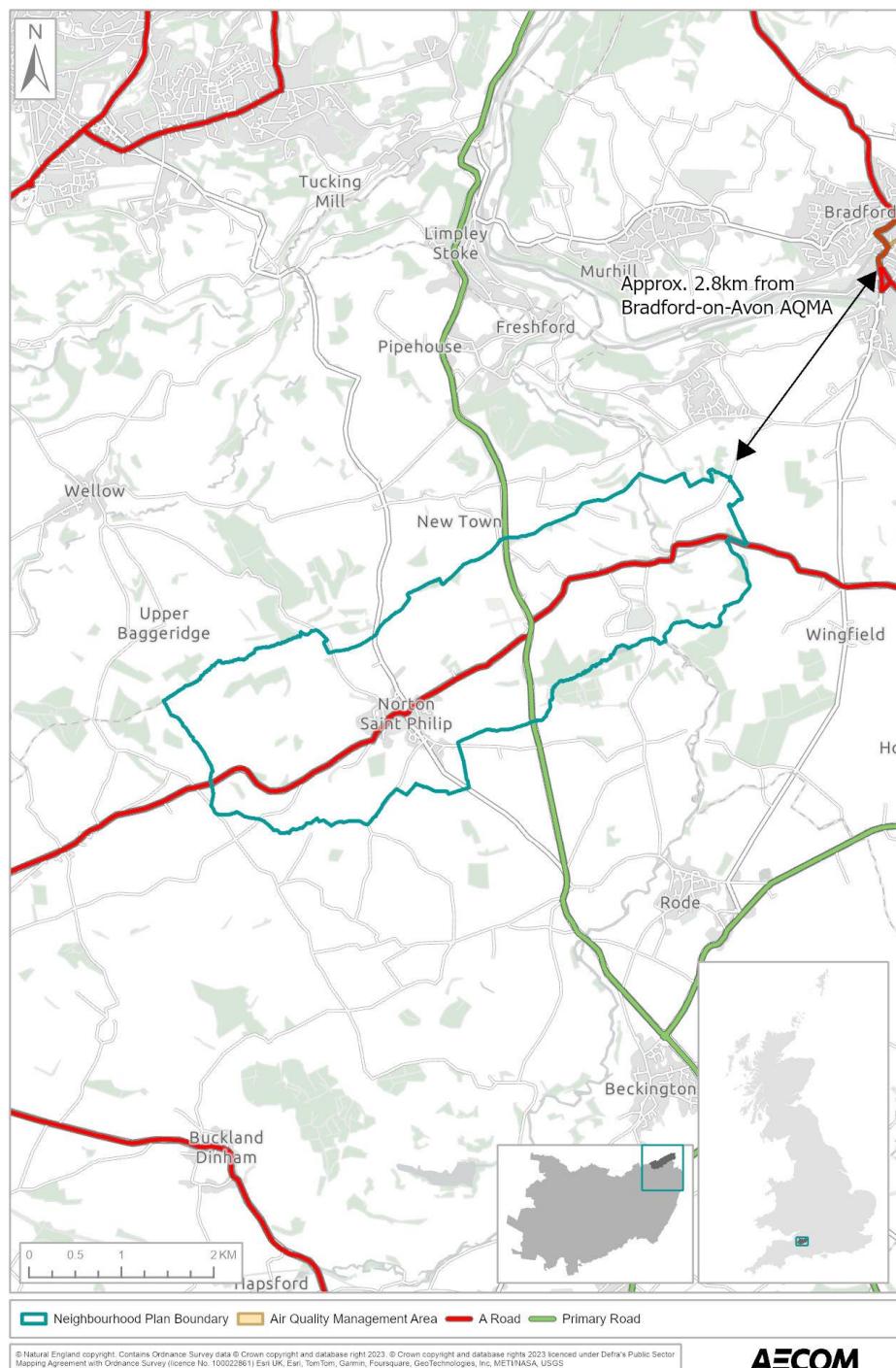


Figure 3.1: Poor air quality contributors and AQMAs in proximity to the neighbourhood area

Key statistics

- There are no AQMAs within the former Mendip district authority boundary, however the Bradford on Avon AQMA is located approximately 2.8km north of the neighbourhood area.

Key evidence sources

3.2 Evidence sources which have informed the development of key issues include:

- [DEFRA UK AIR: Air Information Resource - AQMAs interactive map](#)
- [Mendip District Council - Air Quality Annual Status Report \(ASR\) 2022](#)

Policy context

Table 3.1: Additional plans and policies relating to air quality

Document title	Year of publication
Somerset's Future Transport Plan 2011-2026	2011

Commentary

- 3.3 According to the latest available ASR, produced by the since abolished Mendip District Council, the main pollutant of concern locally is nitrogen dioxide (NO₂), which originates primarily from road traffic emissions. There have been no recorded exceedances in annual air quality objectives for NO₂ in the area.
- 3.4 However, it is noted that the Bradford on Avon AQMA is within 3km of the neighbourhood area - this is designated for exceedances in NO₂. Given the proximity of Bradford on Avon to the neighbourhood area, it is likely residents travel to the settlement to access additional services and facilities. However, the scale of development expected to come forward through the Norton St Philip NP is unlikely to significantly impact upon the AQMA.
- 3.5 Whilst no formal air quality action plan has been put in place for this part of Somerset, measures within the Somerset's Future Transport Plan will contribute to ensuring that levels of NO₂ remain below the air quality objectives.

Key issues and Scoping outcome

- 3.6 There are no AQMAs within or in immediate proximity to Norton St Philip and Farleigh Hungerford. It is possible development through the Norton St Philip Neighbourhood Plan could impact upon localised air quality, for example through increasing the number of vehicles on the road network, which will impact upon NO₂ levels.

- 3.7 Existing air pollution is at a low baseline and any proposed development through the Norton St Philip NP is likely to be modest in scale and thus not likely to cause any significant changes to the existing baseline. Therefore, due to the absence of significant and tangible air quality issues in the neighbourhood area, air quality has been **SCOPED OUT** for the purposes of the SEA process. This means that the plan will not be assessed for its performance against air quality objectives (given that no significant issues or opportunities are expected to arise through the Norton St Philip NP).
- 3.8 Nevertheless, positive planning could be beneficial for air quality through opportunities to improve accessibility, particularly in terms of active travel and encouraging more local journeys and sustainable connections. Therefore, opportunities which address issues such as accessibility and sustainable communities whilst also enhancing air quality are encouraged.

4. Biodiversity and geodiversity

4.1 This section seeks to summarise biodiversity and geodiversity designations, habitats and species within and surrounding the neighbourhood area.

Maps

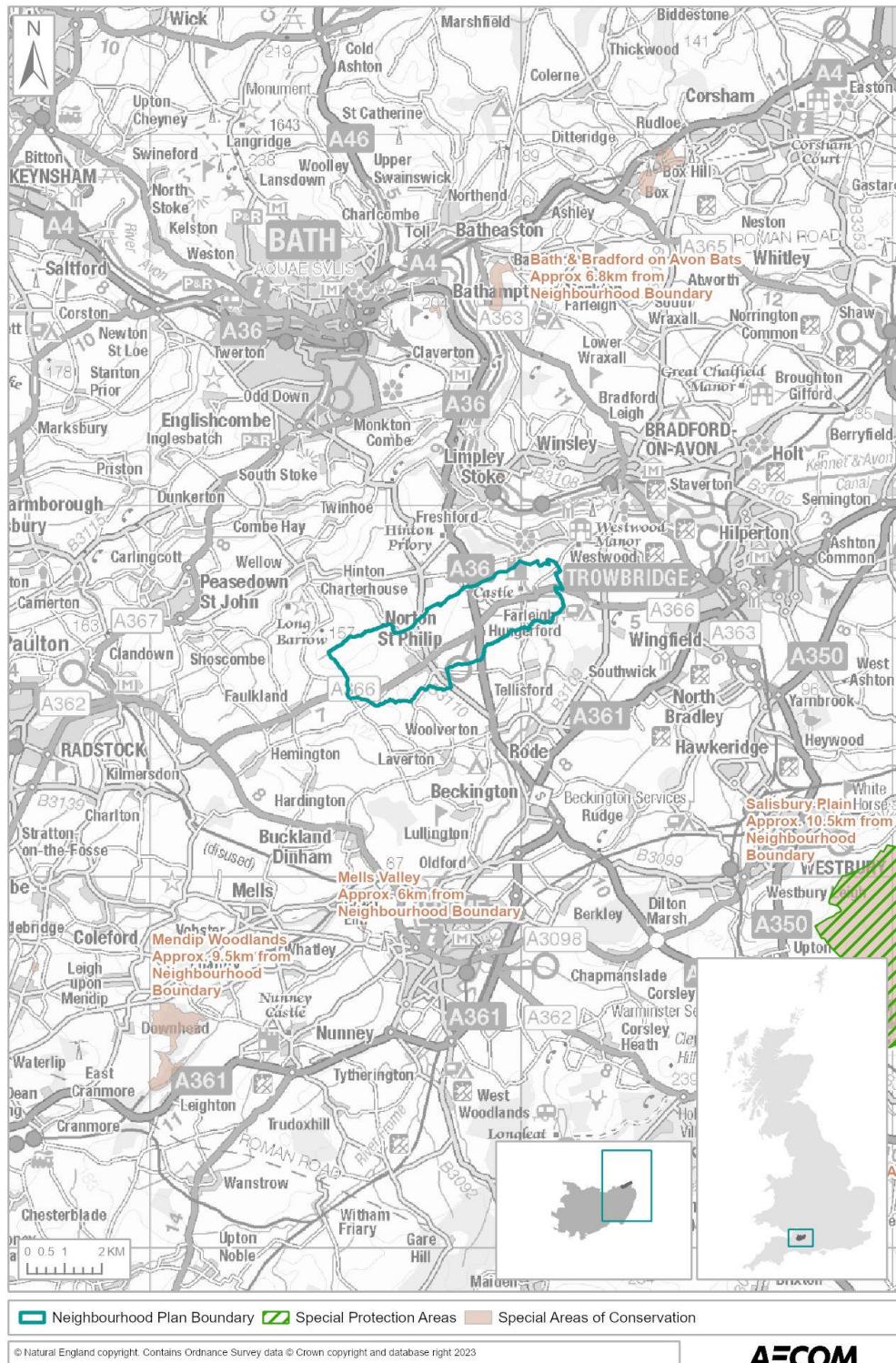


Figure 4.1: International biodiversity and geodiversity designations

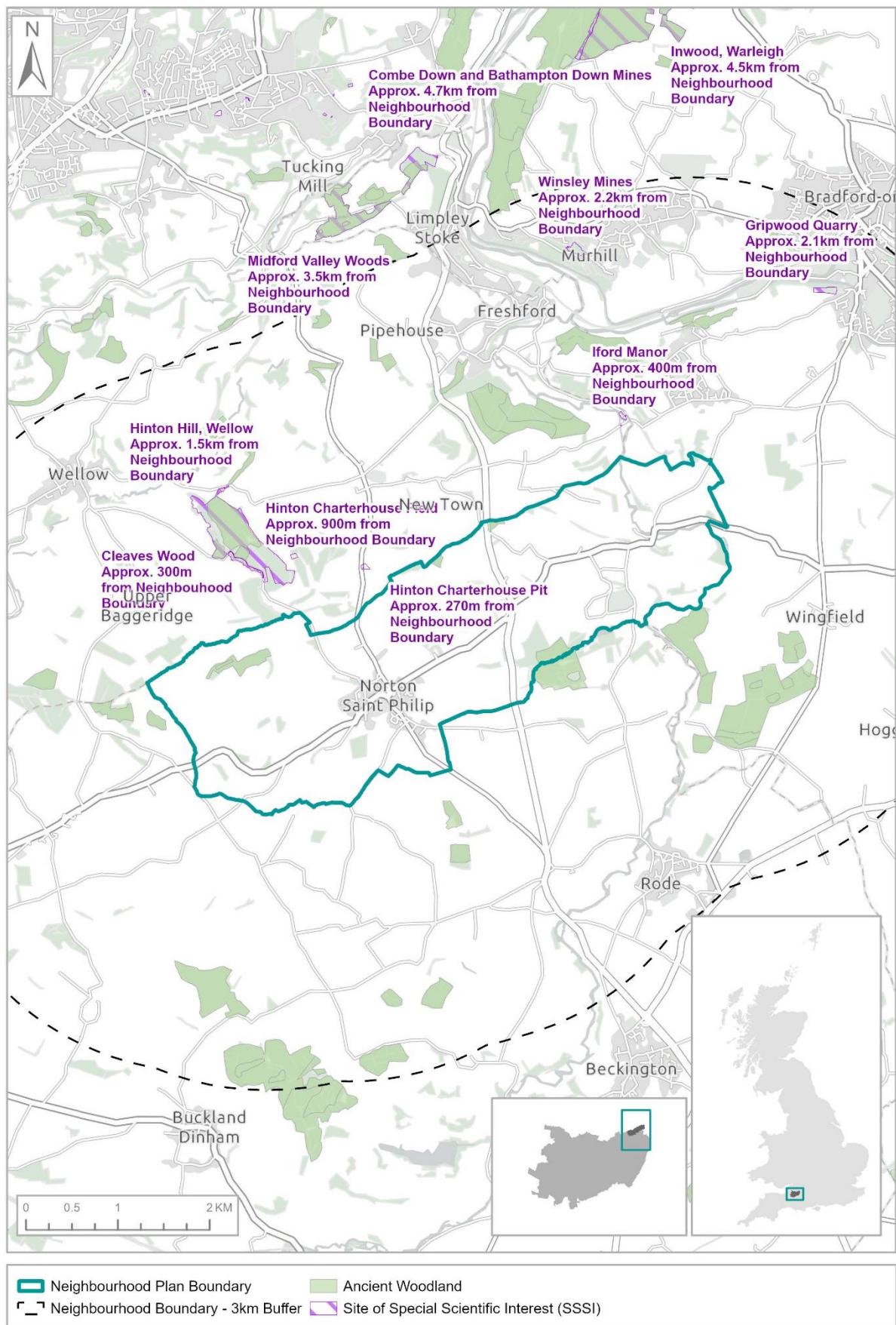


Figure 4.2: National biodiversity and geodiversity designations

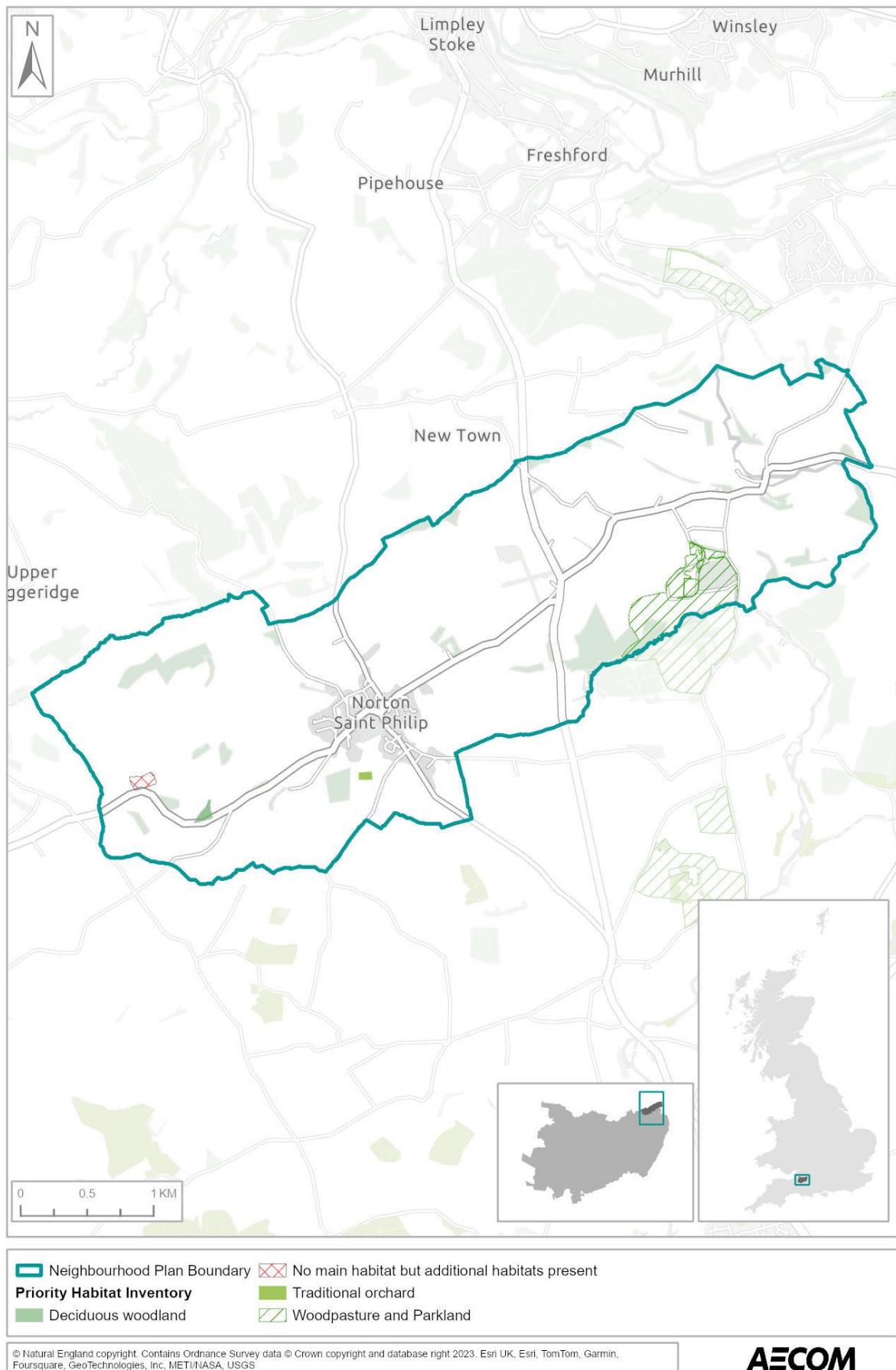


Figure 4.3: Biodiversity Action Plan Priority Habitat

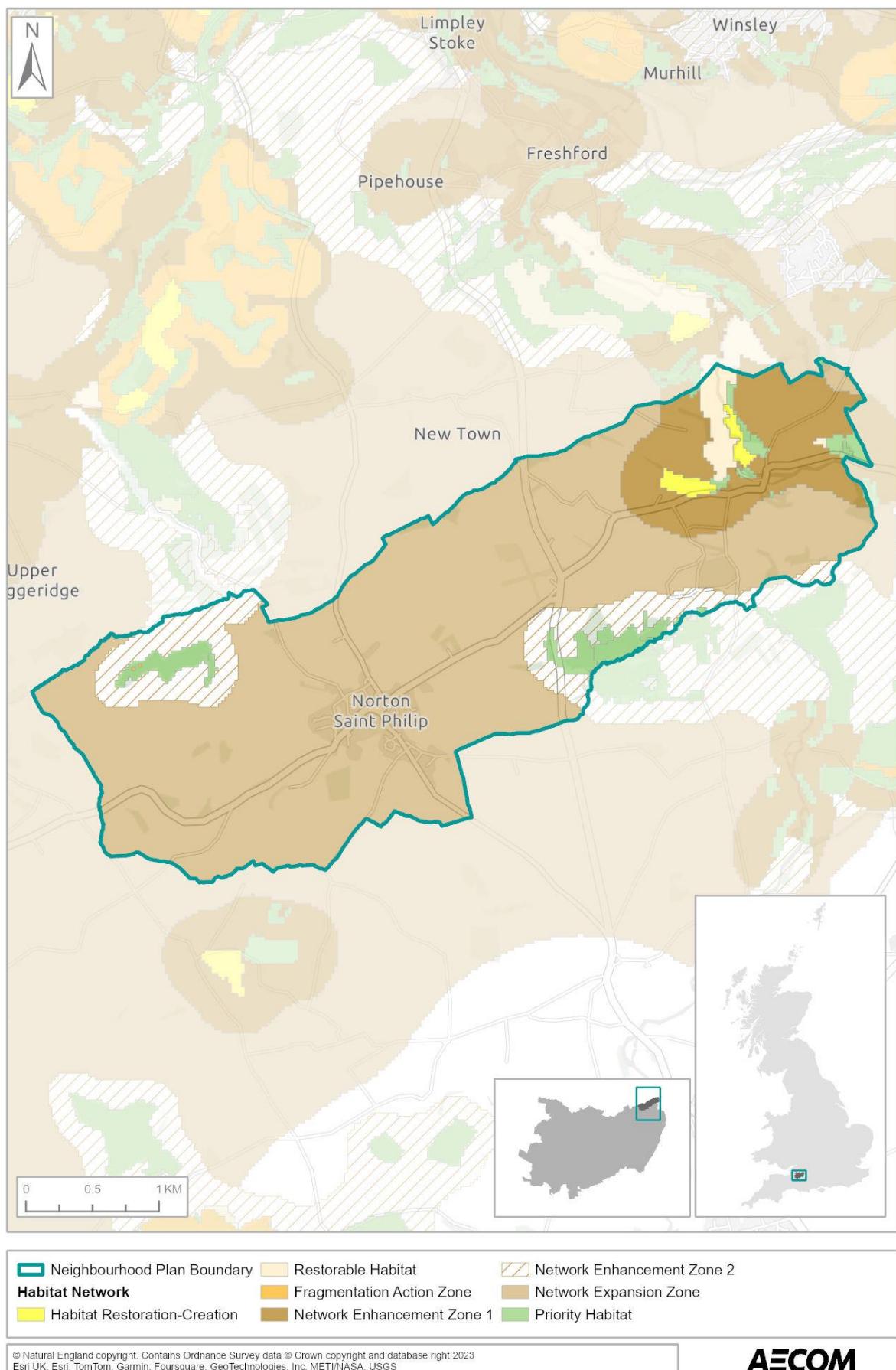


Figure 4.4: National Habitat Network

Key statistics

- Whilst there are no internationally designated sites for biodiversity or geodiversity within the neighbourhood area, it is noted that Norton St Philip is located in a wider landscape with numerous designations. This includes the Mendip Woodlands Special Area of Conservation (SAC), the Mells Valley SAC, the Salisbury SAC and Special Protection Area (SPA), and the Bath and Bradford on Avon Bats SAC.
- There are seven Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSIs) within proximity to the neighbourhood area.
- There are areas of Biodiversity Action Plan (BAP) Priority Habitat within the neighbourhood area, including ancient woodland, deciduous woodland, traditional orchard, and woodpasture and parkland.
- The majority of the neighbourhood area is within an area of Network Expansion Zone, with isolated areas of Network Enhancement Zone 1 and Network Enhancement Zone 2.

Table 4.1: SSSI feature and unit condition

SSSI	Summary Feature Condition	Summary Unit Condition
Hinton Charterhouse Pit	100% in unfavourable-declining condition	100% in unfavourable-declining condition
Cleaves Wood	Not recorded	100% favourable condition
Iford Manor	100% in favourable condition	100% in favourable condition
Hinton Charterhouse Field	100% in unfavourable-declining condition	100% in unfavourable-declining condition
Hinton Hill, Wellow	100% in favourable condition	100% in favourable condition
Gripwood Quarry	100% in unfavourable-recovering condition	46.13% in favourable condition, 53.87% in unfavourable-recovering condition
Winsley Mines	100% in unfavourable-recovering condition	100% in unfavourable-recovering condition

Key evidence sources

4.2 Evidence sources which have informed the development of key issues include:

- [DEFRA's MAGiC Map](#)
- [JNCC](#)
 - [Bath and Bradford on Avon Bats SAC](#)
 - [Mells Valley SAC](#)
 - [Mendip Woodlands SAC](#)
 - [Salisbury Plain SAC](#)
 - [Standard Data Form for the Salisbury Plan SPA](#)
- [Natural England: Designated Sites View](#)
 - [Cleaves Wood SSSI](#)
 - [Gripwood Quarry SSSI](#)
 - [Hinton Charterhouse Field SSSI](#)
 - [Hinton Charterhouse Pit SSSI](#)
 - [Hinton Hill, Wellow SSSI](#)
 - [Iford Manor SSSI](#)
 - [Winsley Mines SSSI](#)
- [Natural England: National Habitat Network Maps - User Guidance v.2](#)

Policy context

Table 4.2: Additional plans and policies relating to biodiversity and geodiversity

Document title	Year of publication
Bat Special Areas of Conservation (SAC) - Planning Guidance for Wiltshire	2015
Site Improvement Plan: Bath and Bradford on Avon Bats (SIP011)	2015
Site Improvement Plan: Mells Valley (SIP135)	2015
Site Improvement Plan: Mendip Woodland (SIP137)	2015
Site Improvement Plan: Salisbury Plan (SIP209)	2015

Commentary

- 4.3 The neighbourhood area does not overlap with international designations for biodiversity or geodiversity. However, the neighbourhood area is within proximity to several SACs and an SPA. In particular, concern has been raised by Natural England over the proximity of the neighbourhood area to the Mells Valley SAC and the Bath and Bradford on Avon Bats SAC. The neighbourhood area sits within a 4km buffer zone for Greater Horseshoe bats.
- 4.4 Whilst the neighbourhood area does not contain national designations for biodiversity or geodiversity within its boundaries, there are several SSSIs within proximity. However, there are no overlaps with the SSSI Impact Risk Zones (IRZs) for the types of development that are likely to come forward through the Norton St Philip NP (e.g., rural residential, residential, and rural residential). different development types.
- 4.5 Biodiversity Action Plan (BAP) Priority Habitat within the Norton St Philip neighbourhood area includes ancient woodland, deciduous woodland, traditional orchard, and woodpasture and parkland. As demonstrated by **Figure 4.2** and **Figure 4.3**, the habitat coverage is fragmented and spread across the neighbourhood area. There is an extensive area of woodpasture and parkland in the eastern half.
- 4.6 An area of Network Expansion Zone extends across the majority of the neighbourhood area, demonstrating Norton St Philip's suitability to expand, link and join habitat networks across the wider area through improving habitat connectivity. There is an isolated area of Network Enhancement Zone 1 in the north-eastern extent of the neighbourhood area – this area is identified as land that is suitable for the creation of primary habitat, which will contribute to the improvement of connectivity. Areas of Network Enhancement Zone 2 are also present within the boundaries of the neighbourhood area, which can help improve biodiversity through land management changes and / or green infrastructure provision.

Key issues

- 4.7 The Norton St Philip neighbourhood area sits within a wider landscape that has a number of biodiversity sensitivities. This includes SPAs, SACs, and buffer zones for protected bat species. It will be vital to ensure new development brought forward through the Norton St Philip NP does not impact upon these designations, for example, through disrupting bat flight patterns, or disrupting biodiversity connectivity.
- 4.8 Whilst the neighbourhood area does not contain national designations for biodiversity or geodiversity within its boundaries, there are several SSSIs within proximity. Four of these sites are in unfavourable condition and are continuing to decline, as set out in **Table 4.1**. The Norton St Philip NP should ensure its policies and plans do not adversely impact upon these sites and contribute to their degradation and potential loss. It is possible that policies including through the neighbourhood plan could contribute to the recovery of these sites.

- 4.9 Although habitat coverage in the neighbourhood area is limited and fragmented, the BAP Priority Habitats in Norton St Philip contribute to the local biodiversity network by providing refuge areas and supporting overall biodiversity connectivity. As such, development through the Norton St Philip NP should be focused away from these areas as much as possible, in order to retain their quality and status.
- 4.10 The Norton St Philip neighbourhood area has great potential to improve biodiversity connectivity and value within the wider landscape. This would likely improve biodiversity quality in the neighbourhood area, but also contribute to the maintenance and improvement of designated sites outside of the neighbourhood area. As such, the Norton St Philip NP should take advantage of these opportunity areas wherever possible; this will help secure biodiversity net-gain in line with national policy.

SEA objective

- 4.11 Based on the key issues discussed above, it is proposed that biodiversity and geodiversity are **SCOPED IN** to the SEA. As such, the SEA should include the following objective and supporting assessment questions:

SEA theme	SEA objective
Biodiversity and geodiversity	Protect and enhance biodiversity and geodiversity.

- 4.12 Supporting assessment questions include (will the option / proposal...):

- Protect and enhance nationally and locally designated sites, including supporting habitats and mobile species that are important to the integrity of these sites?
- Protect and enhance semi-natural habitats as well as priority habitats and species?
- Achieve biodiversity and environmental net gains and support the delivery of ecosystem services and multifunctional green infrastructure networks?
- Increase the resilience of biodiversity in the area to the effects of climate change, including through enhancements to ecological networks?
- Support access to, interpretation and understanding of biodiversity and geodiversity?

5. Climate change and flood risk

- 5.1 This section summarises existing and future flood risk and the wider impacts of climate change, activities in the district which contribute to climate change, and measures to mitigate the effects of climate change and increase resilience.

Maps

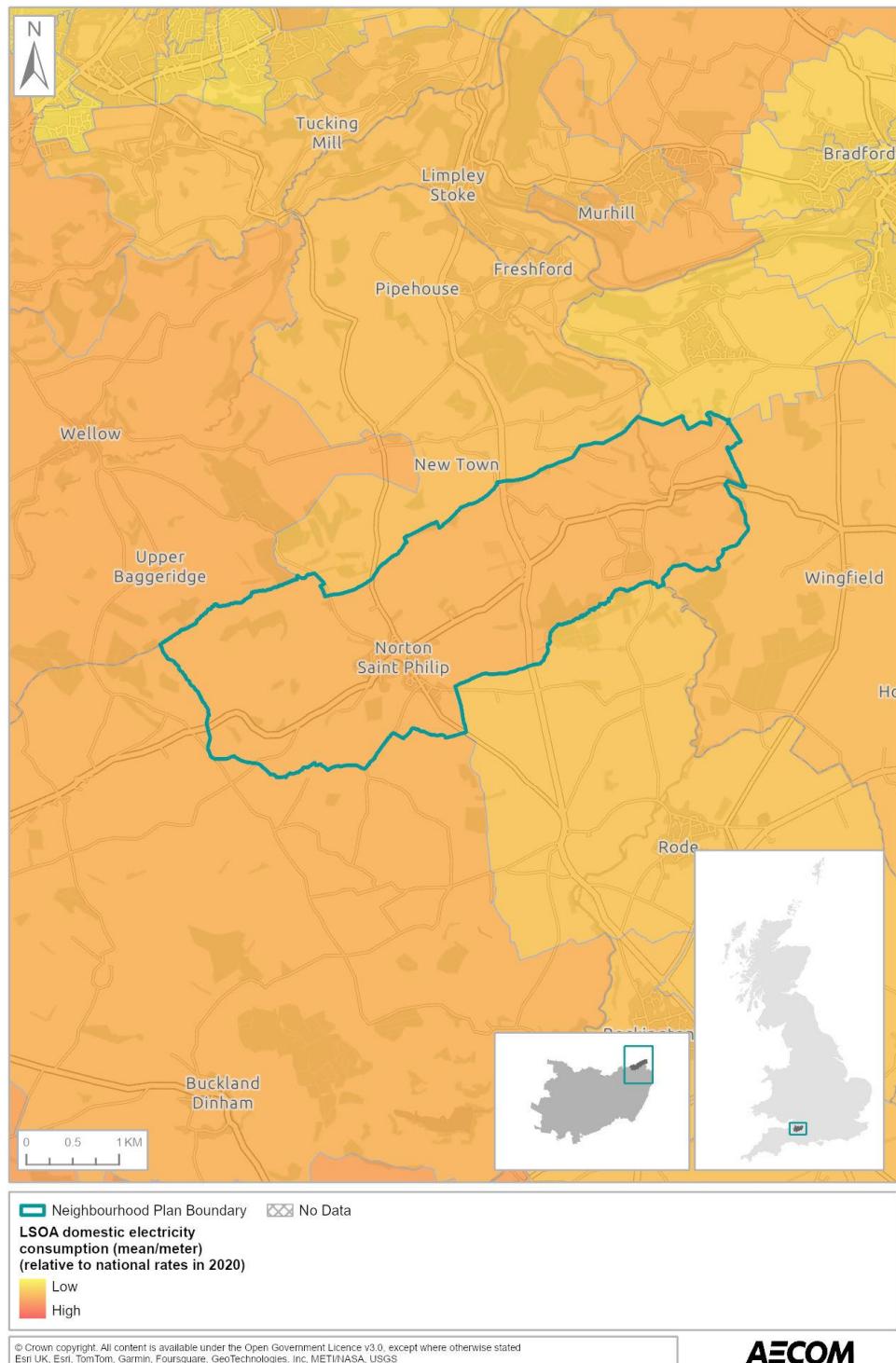


Figure 5.1: Electricity consumption in the neighbourhood area

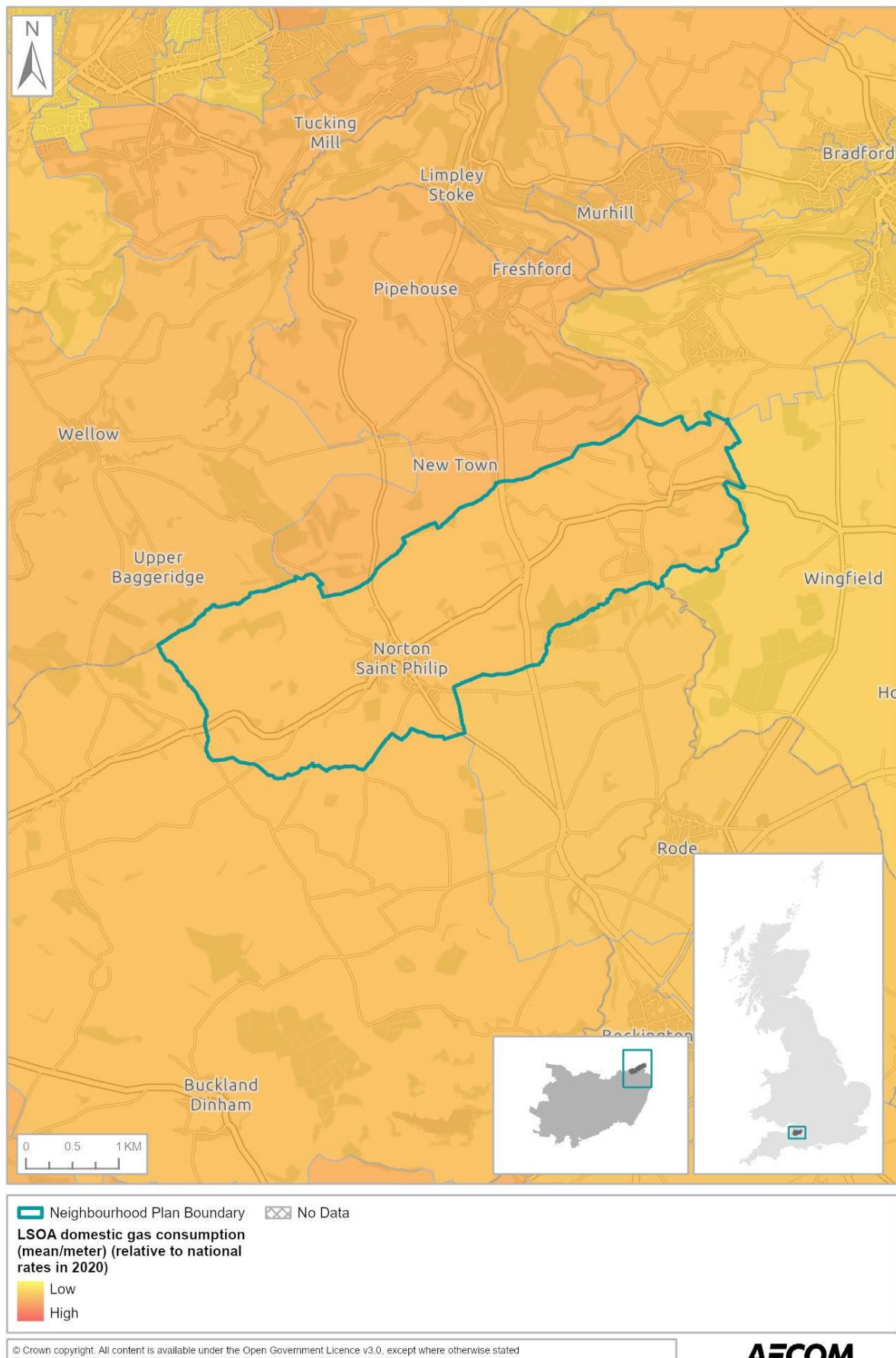


Figure 5.2: Gas consumption in the neighbourhood area

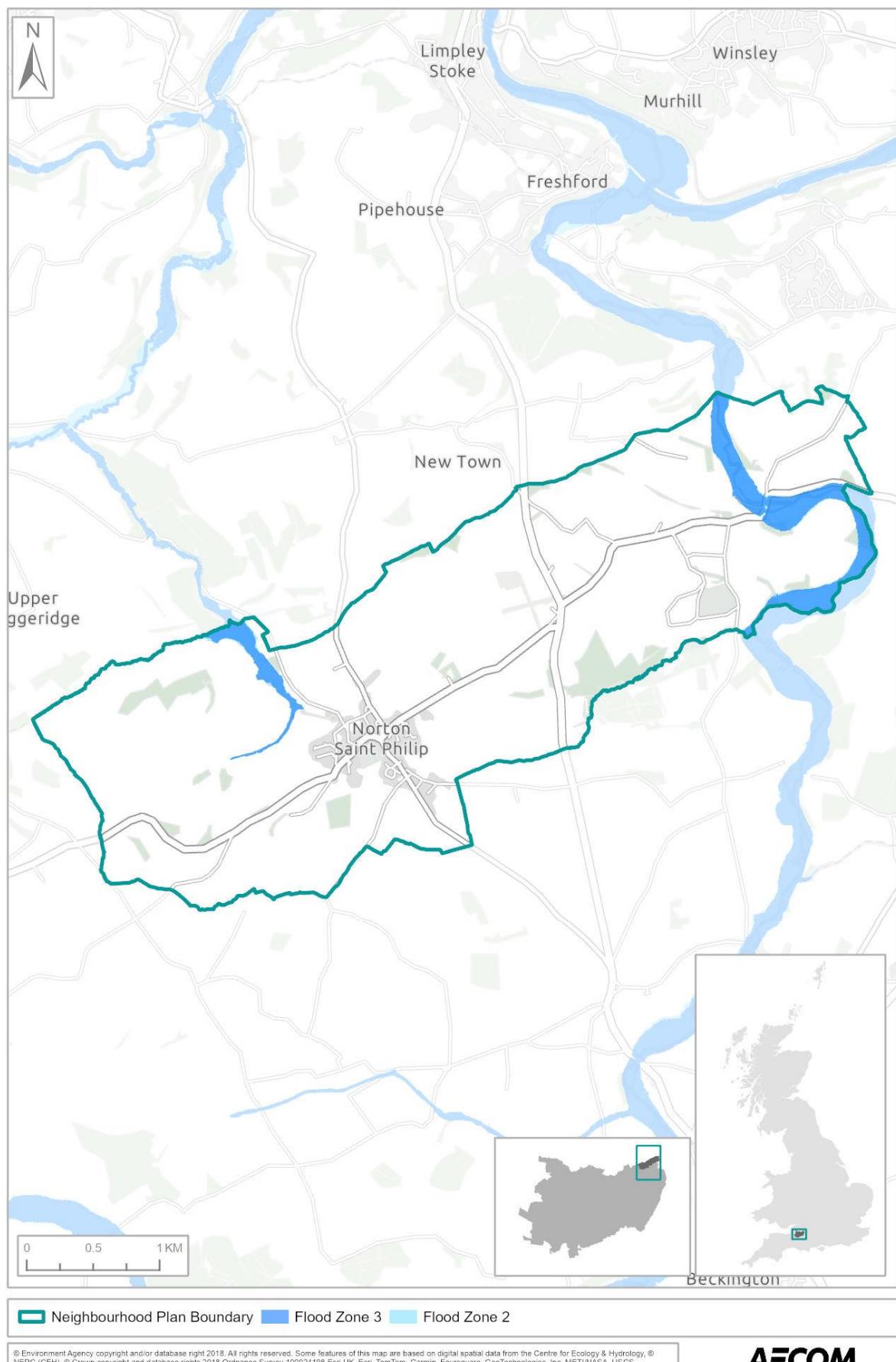


Figure 5.3: Fluvial flood risk in the neighbourhood area

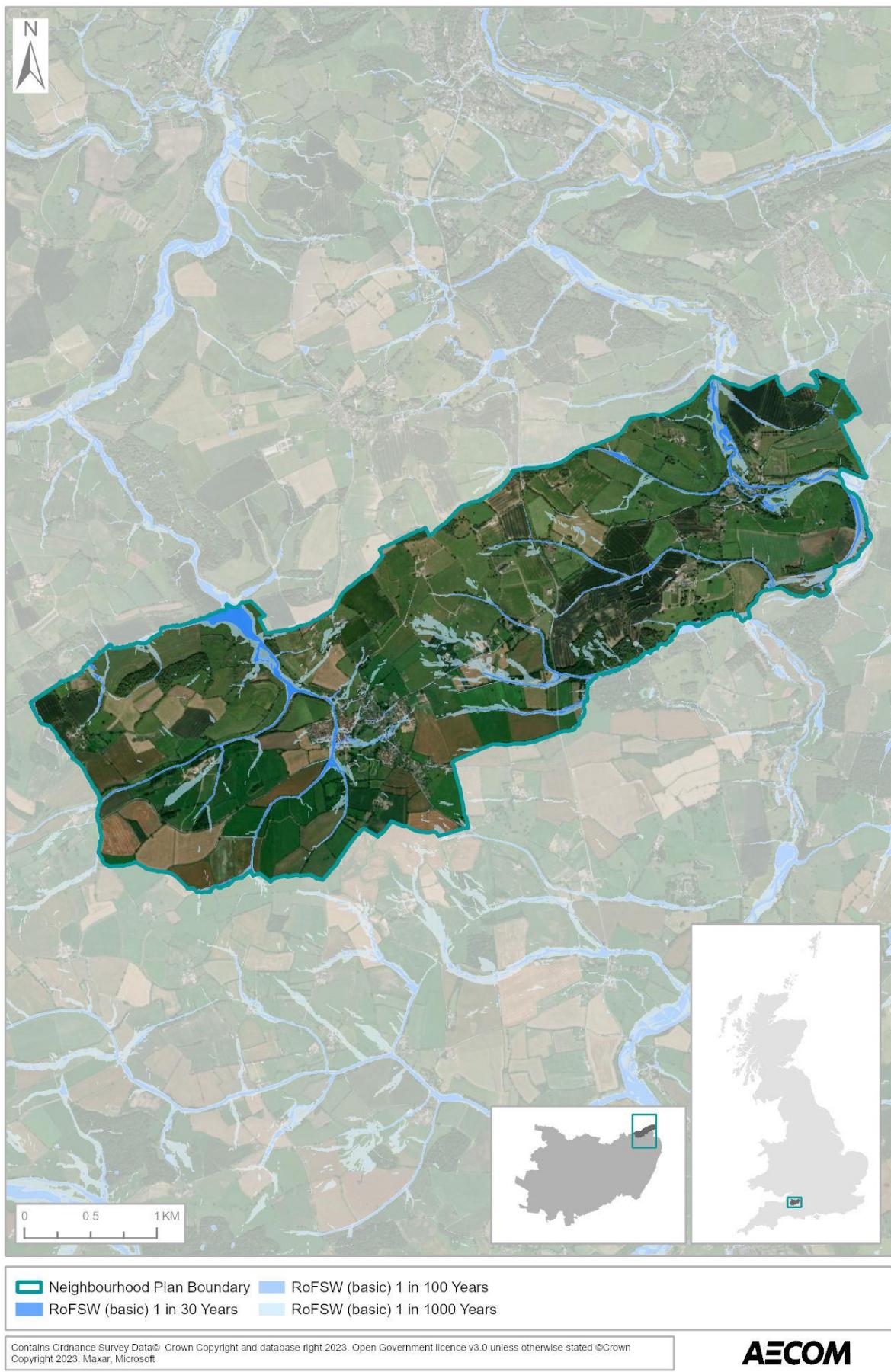


Figure 5.4: Surface water flood risk in the neighbourhood area

Key statistics

- Figure 5.5 indicates that carbon dioxide (CO₂) emissions in the Mendip area of Somerset have decreased by 480.4 kt CO₂e between 2005 and 2021. All sectors have experienced a decrease in emissions over this time period, the biggest being in the industry sector - 140 kt CO₂e across the examined 16 years.
- According to Figure 5.5, the largest contributing sector is the agricultural sector.
- Figure 5.6 demonstrates that average per capita emissions in the Mendip area of Somerset are higher than the averages for Somerset, the South West region, and England for the examined time period. However, the Mendip per capita emissions have reduced the most, by 5.4 tons of CO₂ (t CO₂e).

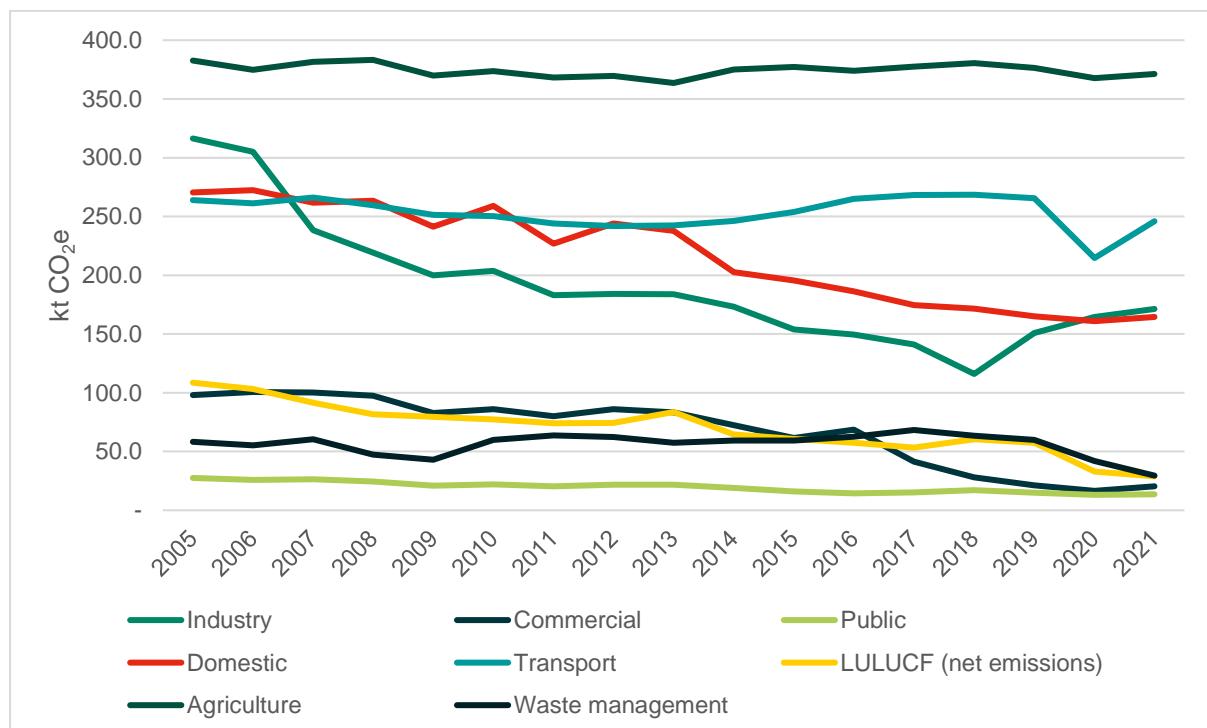


Figure 5.5: Carbon dioxide emissions in kilotons per year (kt CO₂e) for each sector in Mendip, Somerset⁸

⁸ National Statistics [UK local authority and regional carbon dioxide emissions national statistics: 2005 to 2021](#)

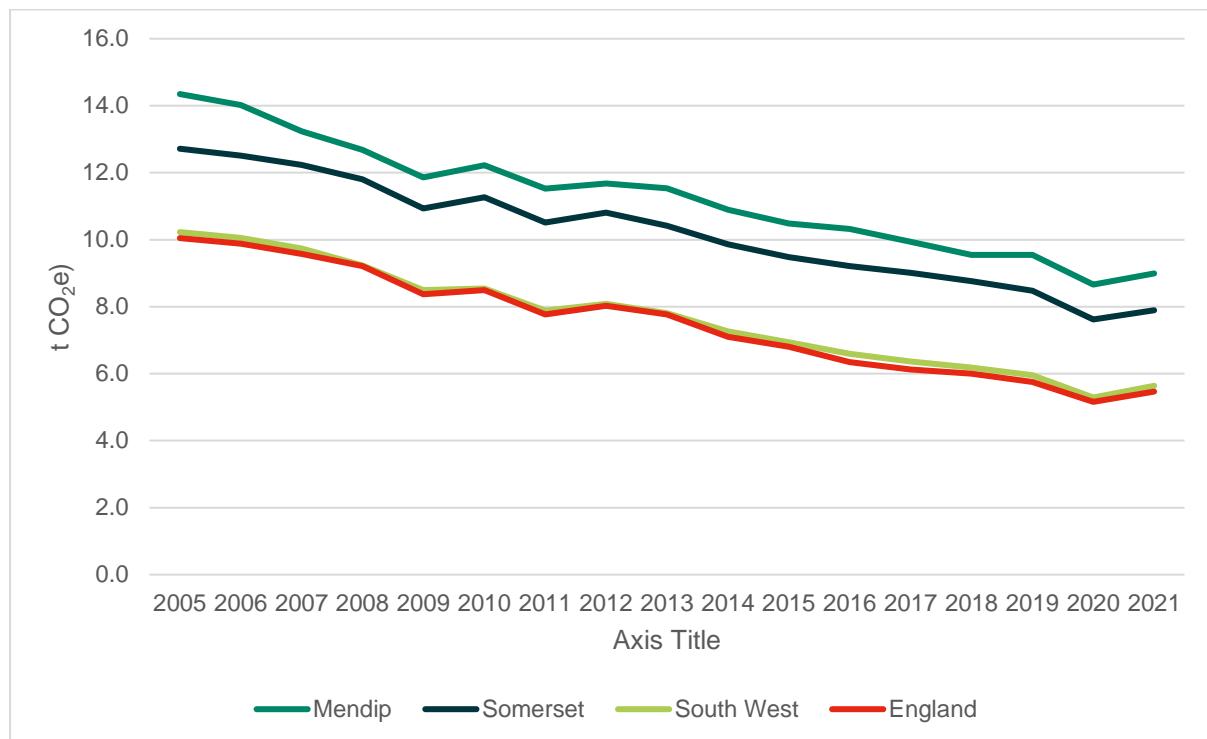


Figure 5.6: Carbon dioxide emissions per capita in tons (t CO₂e) for the Mendip area, in comparison to trends for Somerset, the South West region, and England

5.2 **Table 5.1** below indicates that under a 'business as usual' (i.e., 'do nothing') scenario:

- There could be a 3.12°C increase in mean average winter air temperatures between 1981 and 2080, and an increase of 4.4°C in summer air temperatures over the same period.
- By the 2061-2080 period there could be a 0.72 mm / day increase in winter precipitation compared to the 1981-2000 baseline, and a 0.66 mm / day decrease in summer precipitation.
- Winter mean relative humidity could decrease by 0.66%, and summer humidity by 9.19% between 1981 and 2080.

Table 5.1: Average changes in climate variables during winter and summer periods for the South West of England region under the 'business as usual' climate model

	Mean Average Air Temperature (°C)		Mean Precipitation Rate (mm/day)		Mean Relative Humidity (%)	
	Winter	Summer	Winter	Summer	Winter	Summer
1981-2000	5.05	15.14	4.11	2.07	87.10	77.55
2021-2040	6.23	17.25	4.32	1.72	86.78	74.14
2061-2080	8.00	20.21	4.97	1.21	86.43	69.58

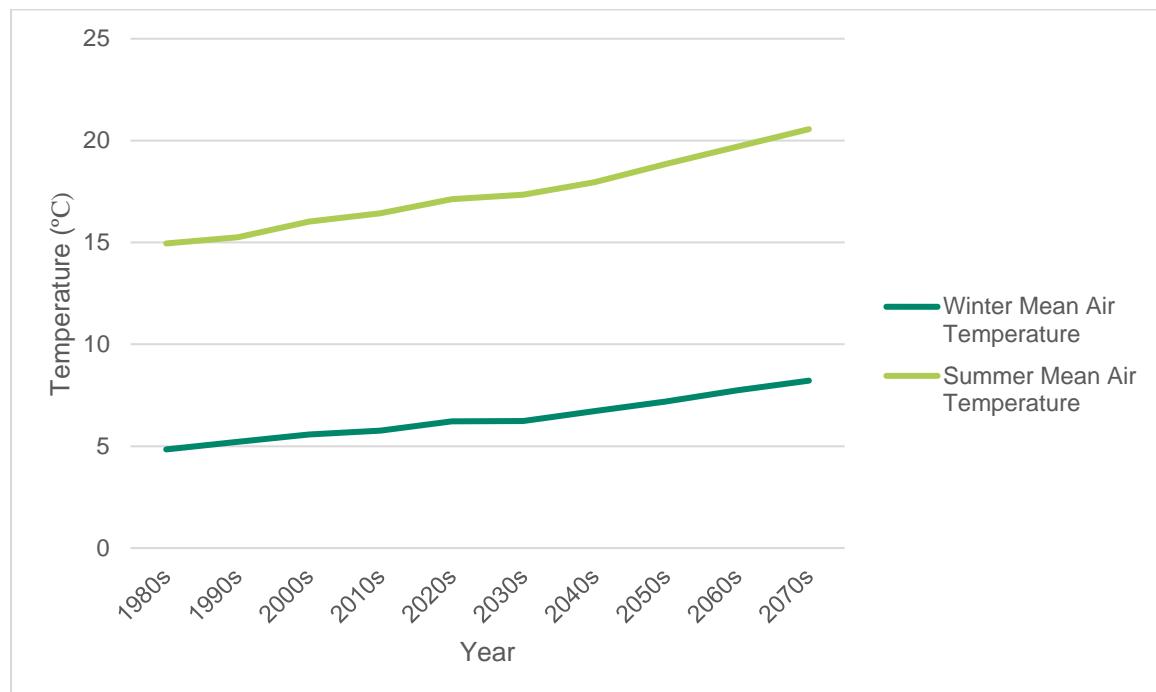


Figure 5.7: The change in mean air temperature (°C) for winter and summer seasons in the South West region (1980s - 2070s)

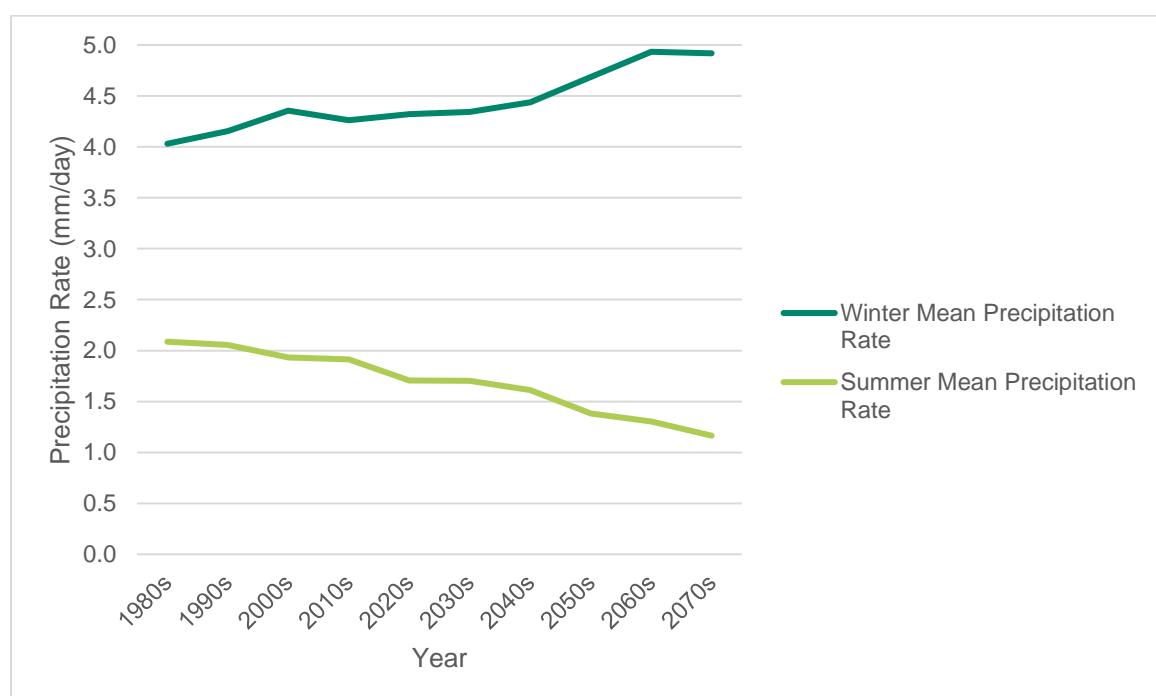


Figure 5.8: The change in mean precipitation rate (mm / day) for winter and summer months in the South West region (1980s - 2070s)

Key evidence sources

5.3 Evidence sources which have informed the development of key issues include:

- [GOV.UK - Check the long term flood risk for an area in England](#)
- [GOV.UK - Get flood risk information for planning in England](#)
- [GOV.UK - UK local authority and regional greenhouse gas emissions national statistics, 2005 to 2021](#)
- [UK Climate Projections \(UKCP\)](#)

Policy context

Table 5.2: Additional plans and policies relating to climate change and flood risk

Document title	Year of publication
Somerset Tree Strategy 2023 to 2033	2023
South West river basin district flood risk management plan	2023
Towards a Climate Resilient Somerset - Somerset's Climate Emergency Strategy	2020
Somerset Councils Electric Vehicle Charging Strategy	2020
Somerset's flood risk management strategy for surface water, groundwater and ordinary watercourses	2014
Somerset County Council Preliminary Flood Risk Assessment Report	2011

Commentary

- 5.4 In line with the UK Government's target of achieving carbon neutrality by 2050, a climate emergency was declared by Somerset Council in February 2019. The Climate Emergency Strategy was published in 2020, and it focuses on three goals:
- i. To decarbonise Local Authorities, the wider public estates and reduce the carbon footprint.
 - ii. Work towards making Somerset a Carbon Neutral County by 2030.
 - iii. To have a Somerset which is prepared for, and resilient to, the impacts of Climate Change.
- 5.5 Domestic electricity consumption in the neighbourhood area is broadly in line with the national average (**Figure 5.1**), as is domestic gas consumption (**Figure 5.2**).

- 5.6 In terms of fluvial flood risk, as shown by **Figure 5.3**, the area north-west of the settlement of Norton St Philip is within Flood Zone 3. This is associated with Norton Brook. In October 2023 and January 2024 there was severe flooding along Norton Brook running through the lowest part of the village. This flooded one home and came close to flooding several others. Additionally, an area in the east of the neighbourhood area around Farleigh Hungerford is also within Flood Zone 3, associated with the River Frome.
- 5.7 Surface water flood risk is prevalent across the neighbourhood area; however, **Figure 5.4** indicates that the Norton St Philip settlement and land in proximity to it is at an elevated risk. Some areas of high surface water flood risk also resonate with aforementioned water bodies, with surface water flood risk likely linked to drainage into the Norton Brook and the River Frome.

Key issues

- 5.8 The Norton St Philip NP is seeking to allocate land for new development. As such, it is likely CO₂ emissions originating from the neighbourhood area will increase (though this could happen outside of the neighbourhood plan through speculative development). However, it is unlikely that this will be a significant increase. Furthermore, standards for energy and water efficiency are established nationally and at the strategic level. The scope for the NP to deliver substantial improvements is therefore unlikely to be significant. Despite this, the context of a declared climate emergency is recognised, alongside a prevailing ambition to interlink carbon neutral objectives at the localised neighbourhood scale.
- 5.9 It will be important for new development to adopt best building practices to limit the increase in emissions, such as using sustainable materials, and incorporating renewable energy infrastructure.
- 5.10 The agricultural sector is the largest contributor of CO₂ emissions in the Mendip area of Somerset, and the transport sector is the second largest. The Norton St Philip NP could contribute to a reduction in emissions linked to transport by ensuring development is located in accessible locations and in proximity to good sustainable transport infrastructure.
- 5.11 There are parts of the neighbourhood area that are at higher risk of fluvial flooding, linked to the presence of water bodies. It is acknowledged these areas can be largely avoided by focusing development in areas with a lower likelihood of fluvial flooding (i.e., areas further away from these features). However, surface water flooding is present across the neighbourhood area – this will be more difficult to avoid given the drainage pattern. As such, there is the need to consider flood risk through the Norton St Philip NP - managing, and where possible, improving drainage rates. The NP could encourage the installation of sustainable urban drainage systems (SuDS) to help manage flood risk across the neighbourhood area, and mitigate risks in areas at higher risk.

SEA objective

5.12 Based on the key issues discussed above, it is proposed that climate change and flood risk are **SCOPED IN** to the SEA. As such, the SEA should include the following objective and supporting assessment questions:

SEA theme	SEA objective
Climate change and flood risk	Reduce the contribution to climate change made by activities within the neighbourhood area and increase resilience to the potential effects of climate change.

5.13 Supporting assessment questions include (will the option / proposal...):

- Avoid vulnerable development in areas of high flood risk, taking into account the likely future effects of climate change?
- Reduce the number of journeys made and reduce the need to travel?
- Promote the use of more sustainable modes of transport, including walking, cycling, public transport, and electric vehicle (EV) infrastructure?
- Increase the number of new developments meeting or exceeding sustainable design criteria?
- Generate energy from low or zero carbon sources, or reduce energy consumption from non-renewable resources?
- Ensure that development does not come forward in areas at higher risk of flooding, considering the likely future effects of climate change?
- Improve and extend green infrastructure networks in the neighbourhood area?
- Sustainably manage water run-off, reducing runoff where possible?
- Increase the resilience of biodiversity in the area to the effects of climate change, including through enhancements to ecological networks?

6. Community wellbeing

- 6.1 This section seeks to summarise population and age structures, deprivation issues, housing mix and affordability, community assets and infrastructure, and influences on health and wellbeing in the neighbourhood area.

Maps

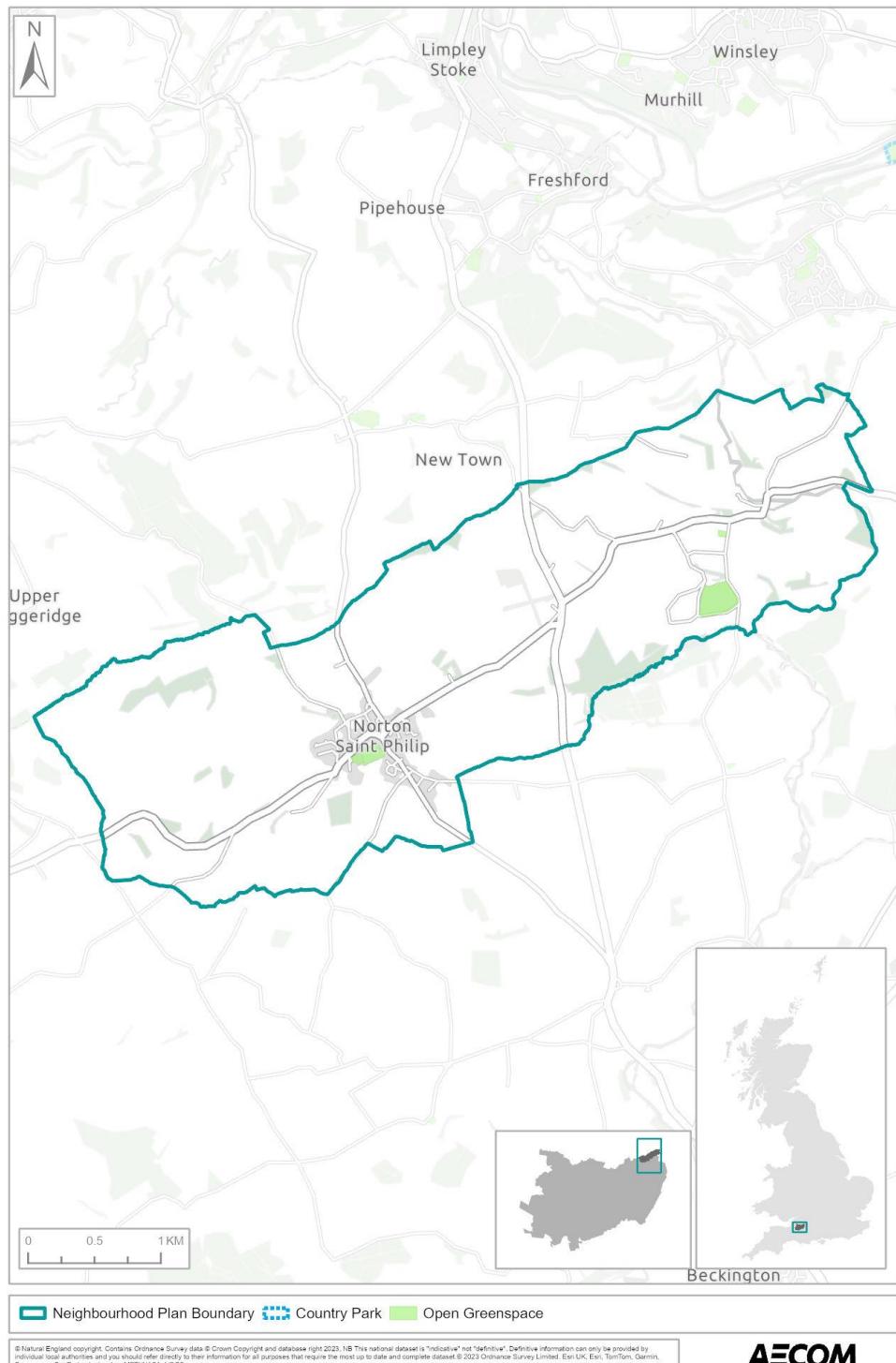


Figure 6.1: Green spaces (OS data)

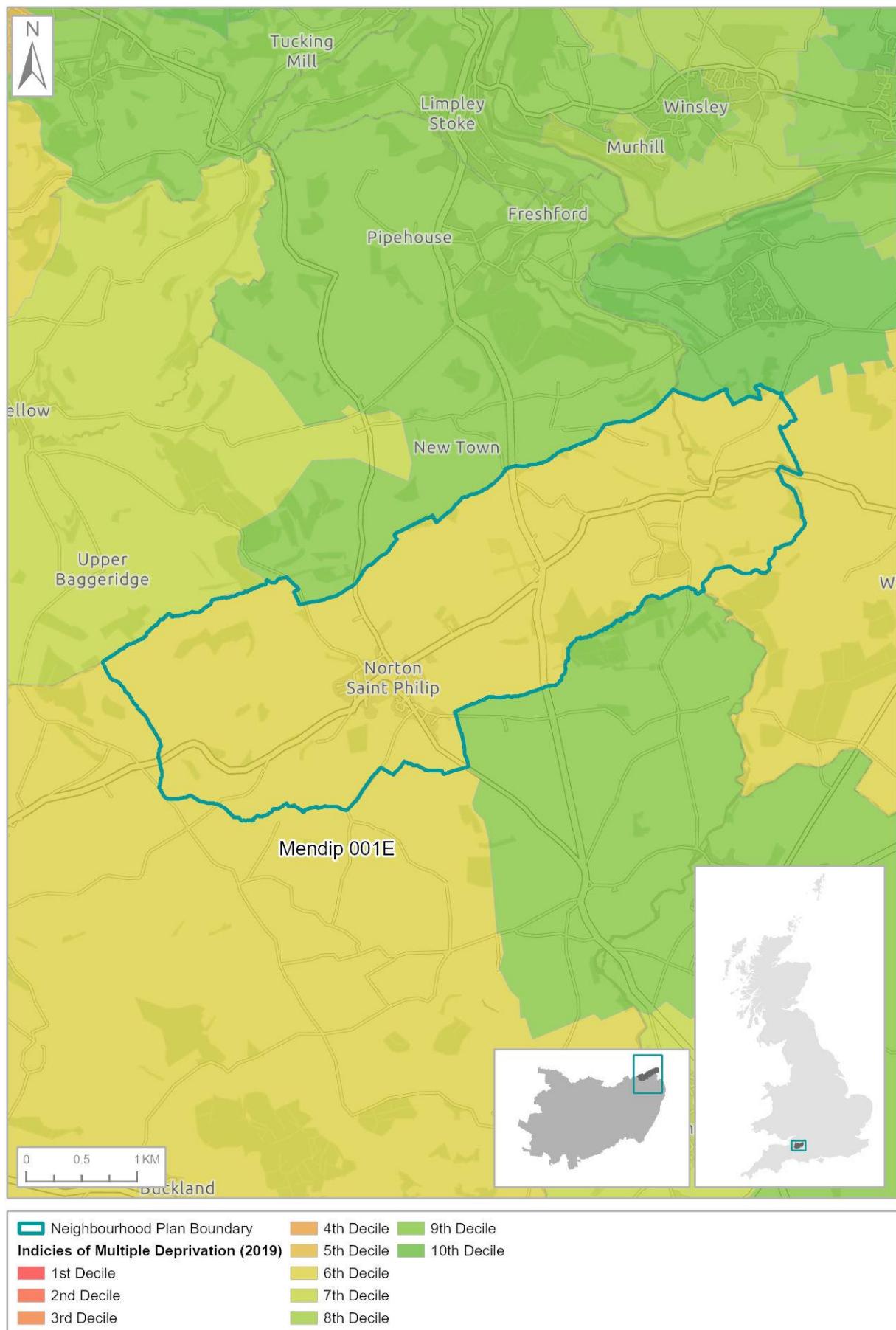


Figure 6.2: Index of Multiple Deprivation (IMD)

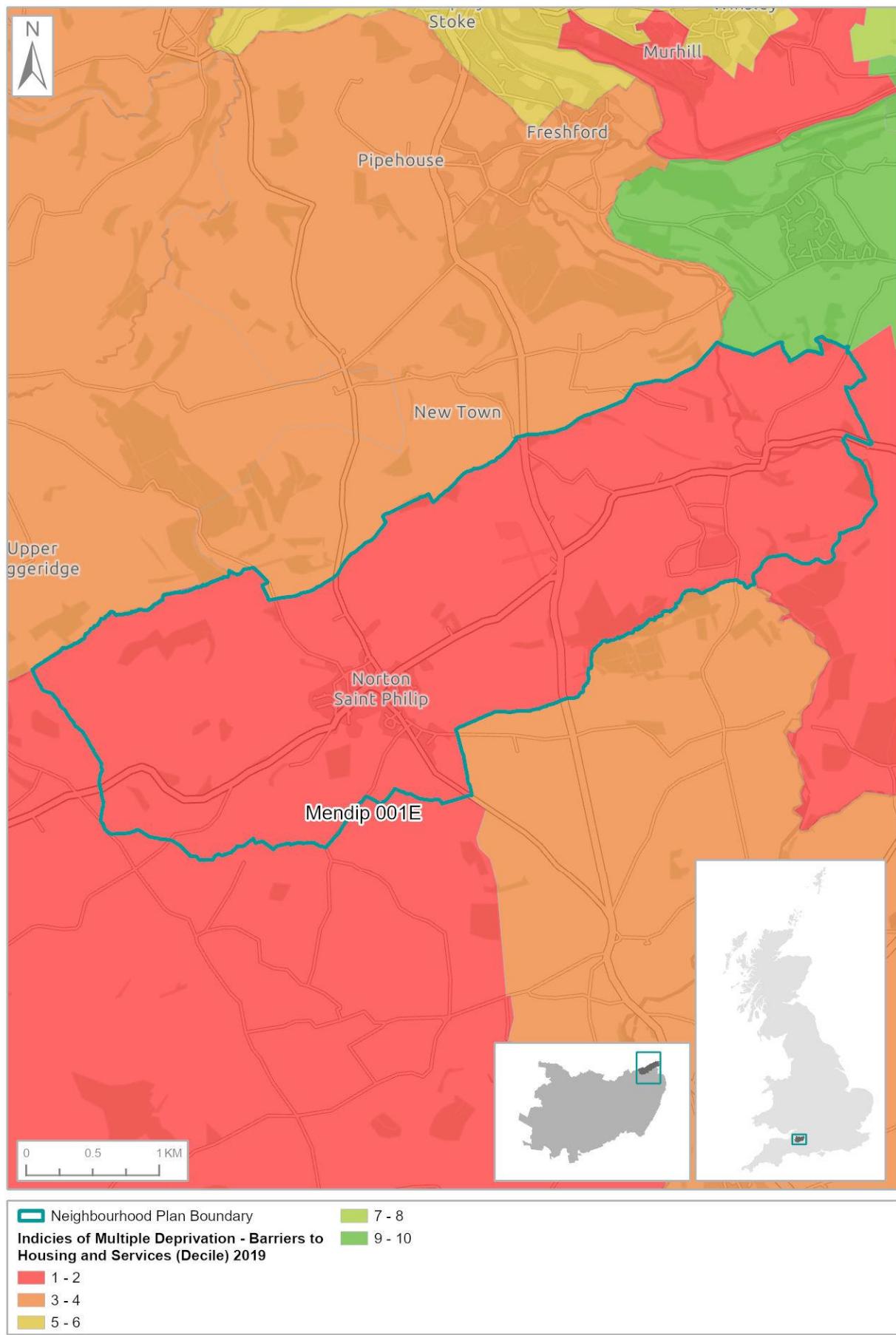


Figure 6.3: Barriers to housing and services deprivation domain

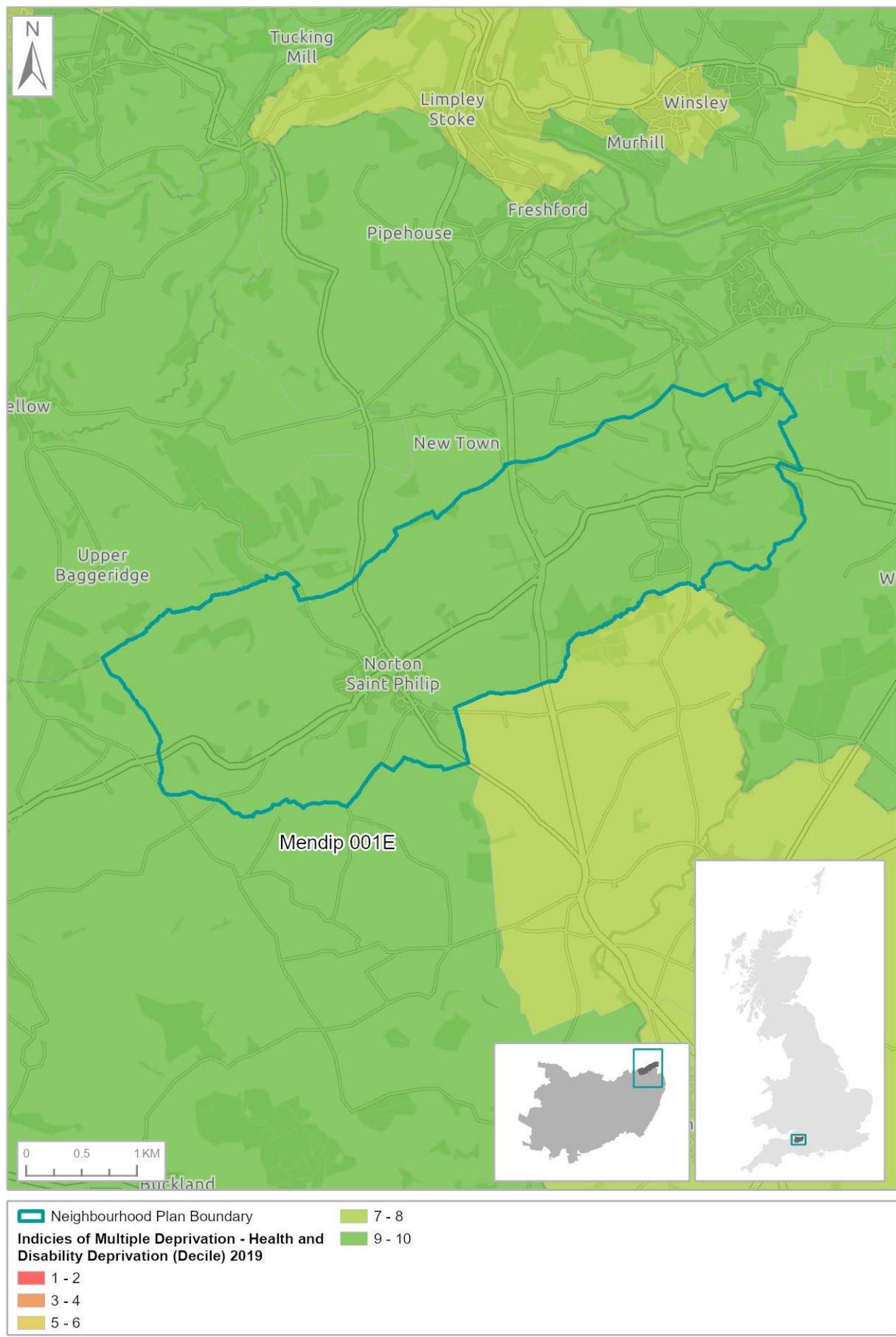
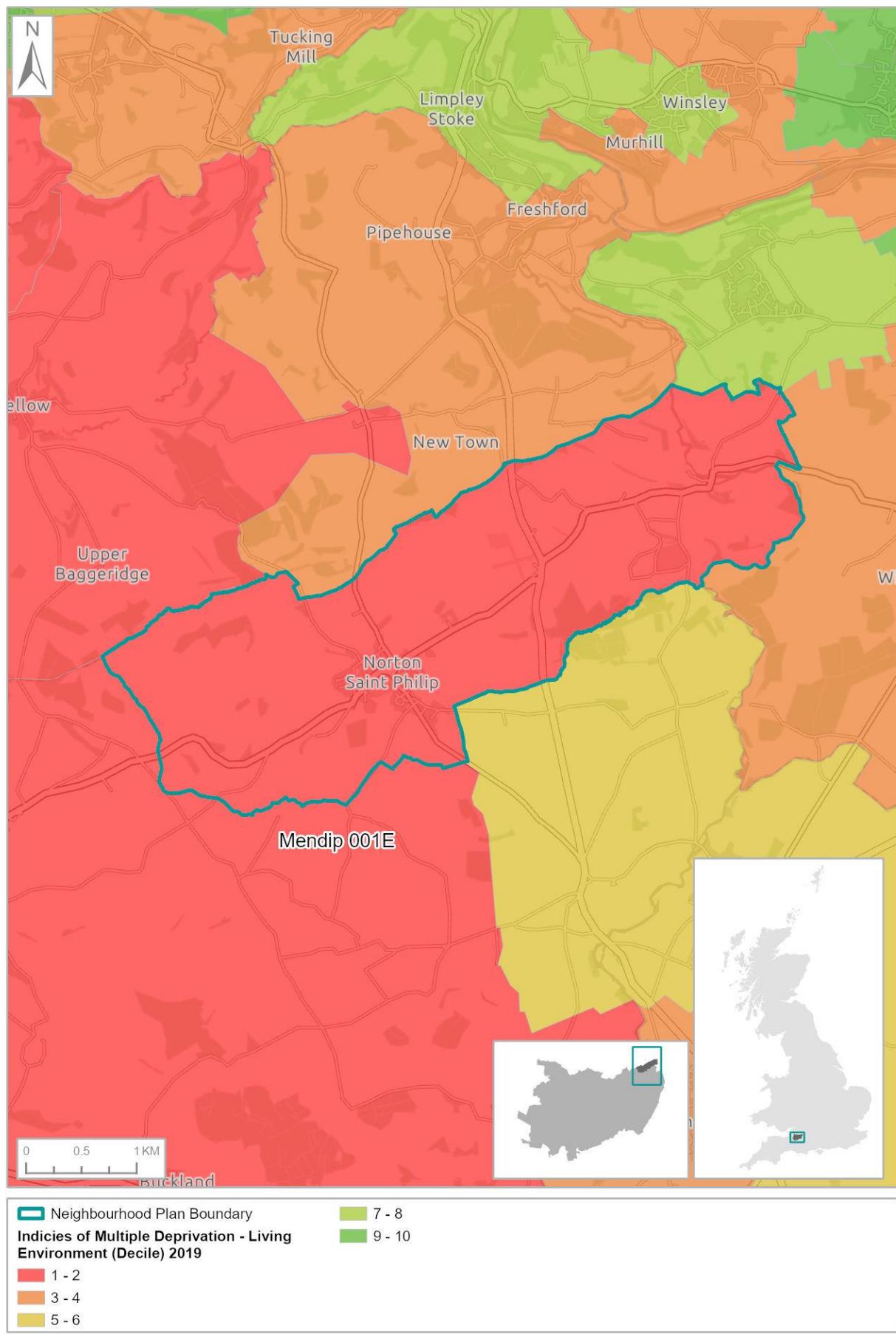


Figure 6.4: Health and Disability deprivation domain



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AECOM

Figure 6.5: Living environment deprivation domain

Key statistics

- **Figure 6.1** indicates there are three open green spaces within the neighbourhood area, with one within Norton St Philip village and the other two in proximity to Farleigh House.
- The neighbourhood area sits within the Mendip 001E lower super output area (LSOA). **Figure 6.2 to Figure 6.5** indicate that overall this LSOA is within the 50% least deprived neighbourhoods across the country for overall deprivation (IMD); it is within the 20% least deprived neighbourhoods for health and disability deprivation, but is within the 20% most deprived neighbourhoods for barriers to housing and services and the living environment.
- **Figure 6.6** indicates the three largest age groups in the Norton St Philip neighbourhood area covers the ages 70 to 79, and 50 to 54 (according to Census 2021). It also shows that Norton St Philip has a greater ageing population in comparison to national trends.
- **Figure 6.7** demonstrates there is a lower proportion of the population in the neighbourhood area that reports fair, bad, and very bad health in comparison to data for Somerset, the South West region, and England. The neighbourhood area has higher levels of reported very good and good health in comparison to the wider Somerset area.
- According to **Figure 6.8**, the majority of residents own their home outright, or with a mortgage. Under 20% of the residents rent, socially or privately. This is reflected in the 2023 housing survey undertaken by the Norton St Philip parish council.
- It is noted that a large proportion of the neighbourhood area is within the Bristol and Bath Green Belt.

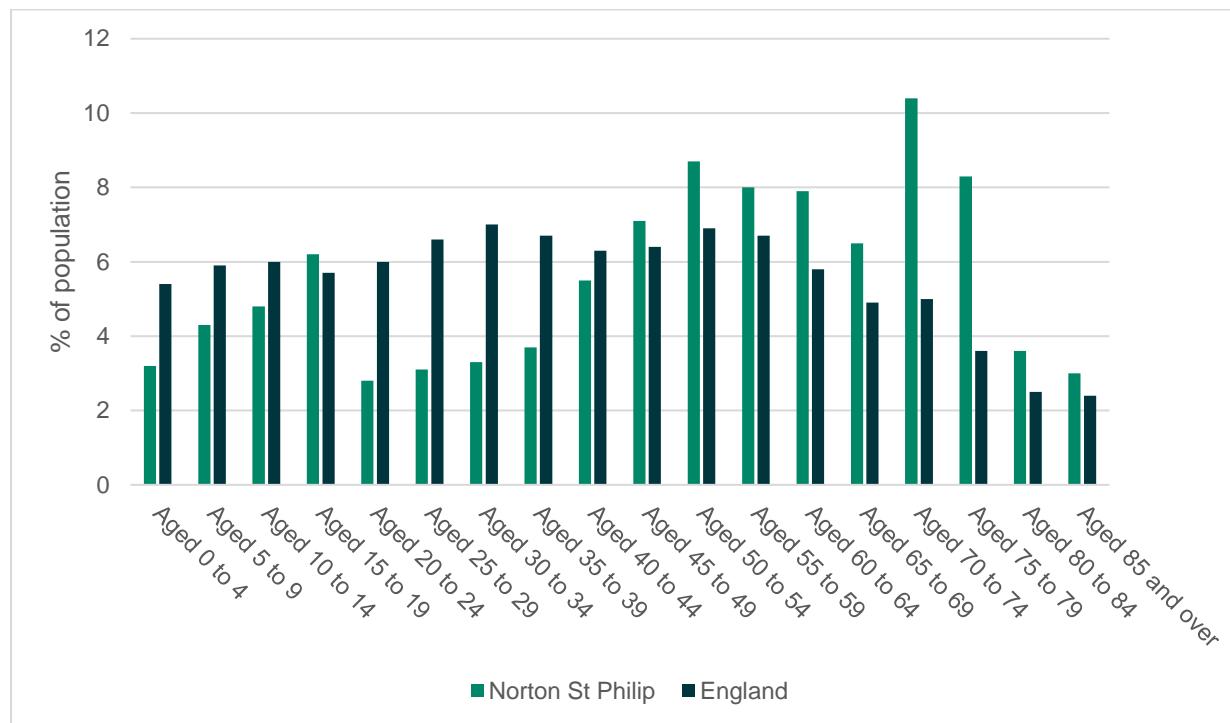


Figure 6.6: Age structure in Norton St Philip in comparison to England (Census 2021)

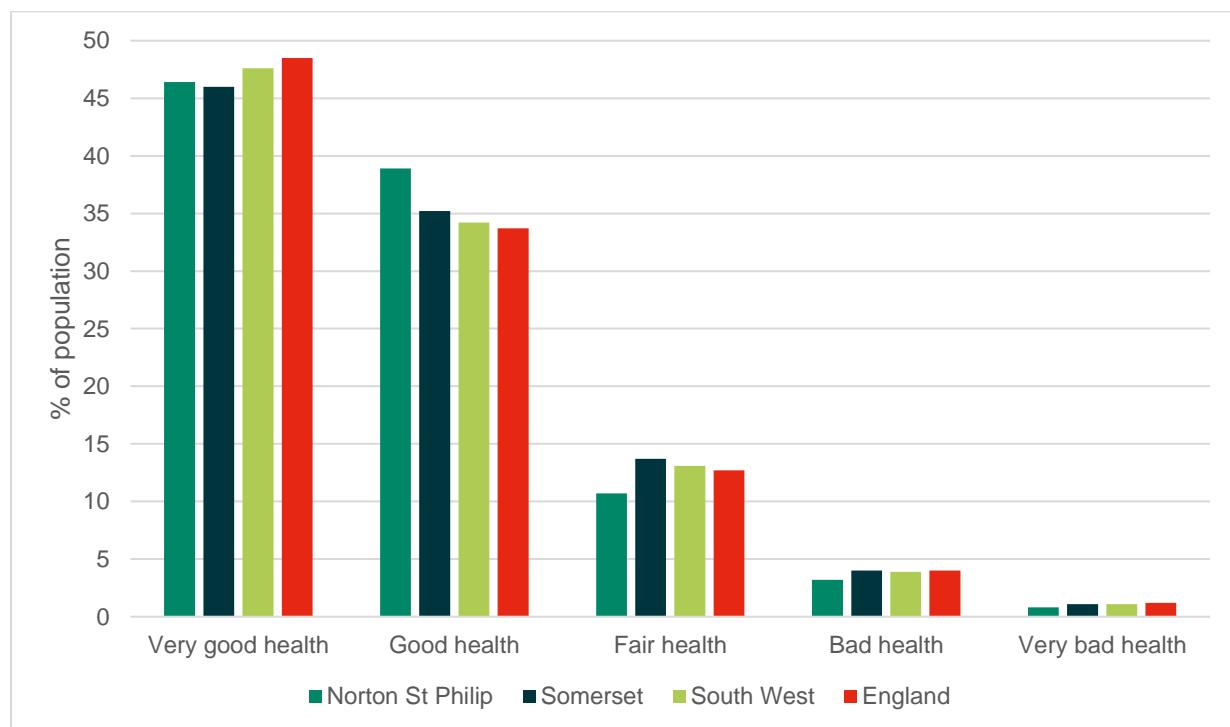


Figure 6.7: Health in Norton St Philip in comparison to Somerset, regional and national trends (2021 Census)

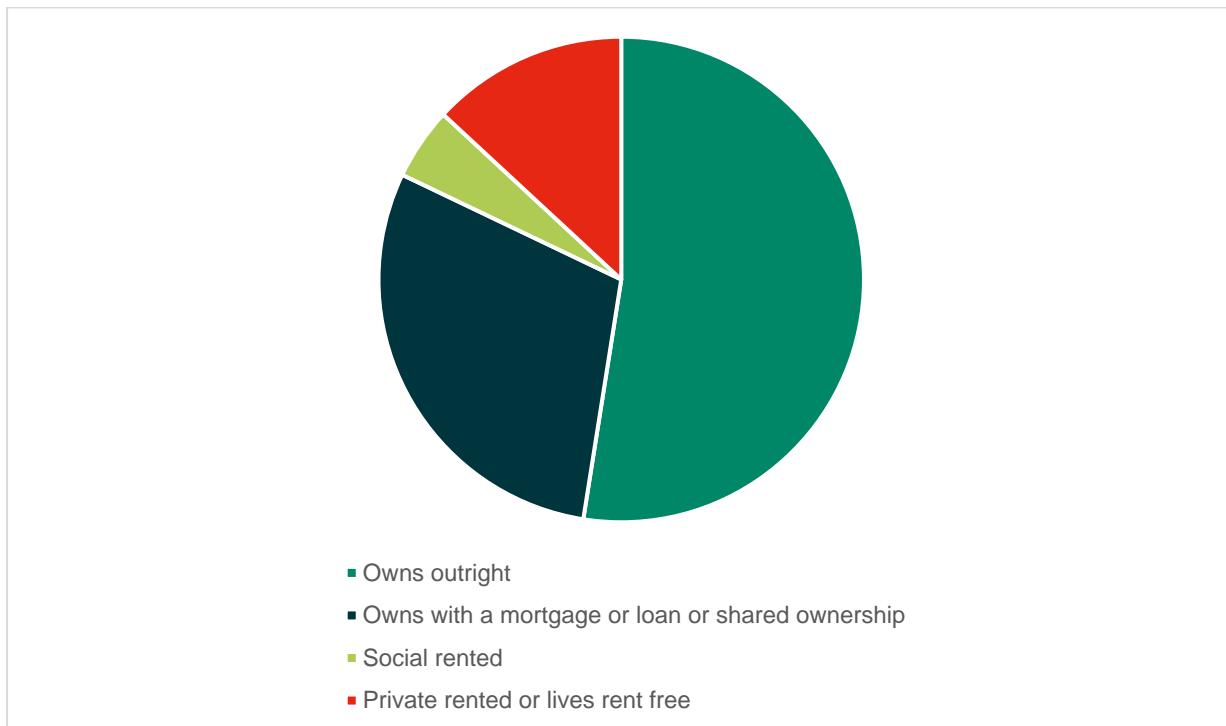


Figure 6.8: Tenure in the Norton St Philip neighbourhood area (2021 Census)

Key evidence sources

6.2 Evidence sources which have informed the development of key issues include:

- [Google Maps](#)
- [Indices of Deprivation: 2019 and 2015](#)
- [Norton St Philip Greenspace SPD](#)
- [Norton St Philip 2023 Housing Survey Report](#)
- [Norton St Philip - Local Green Space](#)
- [Office for National Statistics - Census 2021 - Build a custom area profile](#)

Policy context

Table 6.1: Additional plans and policies relating to community wellbeing

Document title	Year of publication
Mendip Greenspace Supplementary Planning Document	2023
Somerset Physical Activity and Sports Strategy 2022 - 2030	2022
Somerset Homelessness and Rough Sleeper Strategy and Action Plan 2019 - 2023 (extended to 2025)	2019
Somerset Housing Strategy 2019 - 2023 (extended to 2025)	2019

Commentary

- 6.3 There are a number of community services and facilities within the neighbourhood area. This includes but is not limited to: the village hall within Norton St Philip village; the Farleigh Road Farm Shop and Norton St Philip Co-Operative Food; the Norton St Philip Church of England primary school and pre-school; a number of churches; a number of places to stay; a number of businesses (like Haven Timber); a motocross track; and a swimming club. There is no health infrastructure or secondary education facilities within the neighbourhood area, requiring residents to travel outside of the area to access these services.
- 6.4 The neighbourhood area sits within one LSOA, the Mendip 001E LSOA. It is noted this LSOA includes other civil parishes as well as the Norton St Philip neighbourhood area and so deprivation levels also reflect conditions outside of the neighbourhood area. The high deprivation experienced linked to barriers to housing and services could reflect potentially poorer physical and financial accessibility to housing and local services. The high deprivation experienced linked to the living environment could reflect potentially poorer housing quality as well as environmental features, like traffic accidents and air quality.
- 6.5 The 2023 Housing Survey undertaken by the Norton St Philip parish council indicates that over 40% of respondents did not believe additional housing types were needed in the neighbourhood area. Outside of this group, over 30% of respondents believe discounted housing is needed, and over 25% believe social rental properties are needed. This would likely encourage younger people and young families to stay within the neighbourhood area – which would contribute to a more diverse population structure and community vibrancy. Comments received on the Housing Survey indicate that affordable housing could be welcomed; however, the village of Norton St Philip has already seen substantial growth - as such, there is a perceived sense of hesitancy to be in favour of more development coming forward.

Key issues

- 6.6 The Bristol and Bath Green Belt covers much of the neighbourhood area and represents a significant constraint to development.
- 6.7 Whilst the Norton St Philip neighbourhood area generally experiences low levels of deprivation, it does experience high levels of deprivation linked to the proximity and accessibility of houses and services, and the quality of the living environment. This reflects the limited community infrastructure in the neighbourhood area including absence of secondary education and health facilities.
- 6.8 There is a need for affordable and discounted homes within the neighbourhood area, as identified by respondents to the 2023 Housing Survey. Encouraging a more diverse mix of tenure will contribute to community wellbeing by allowing family groups to stay together and diversifying the age of the population.

SEA objective

6.9 Based on the key issues discussed above, it is proposed that community wellbeing is **SCOPED IN** to the SEA. As such, the SEA should include the following objective and supporting assessment questions:

SEA theme	SEA objective
Community wellbeing	Ensure growth in the neighbourhood area is aligned with the needs of all residents, improving accessibility, anticipating future needs and specialist requirements, and supporting cohesive and inclusive communities.

6.10 Supporting assessment questions include (will the option / proposal...):

- Provide everyone with the opportunity to live in good quality, affordable housing?
- Support the provision of a range of house types and sizes?
- Meet the needs of all sectors of the community?
- Deliver new facilities to reduce the need to travel outside the neighbourhood area?
- Provide flexible and adaptable homes that meet people's needs, particularly the needs of an ageing population?
- Improve the availability and accessibility of key local facilities, including health infrastructure?
- Encourage and promote social cohesion and active involvement of local people in community activities?
- Facilitate green infrastructure enhancements, including improved access to open space?
- Maintain or enhance the quality of life of existing residents?

7. Historic environment

- 7.1 This section seeks to summarise designated and non-designated heritage assets (including archaeology) and their settings, within and surrounding the neighbourhood area.

Maps

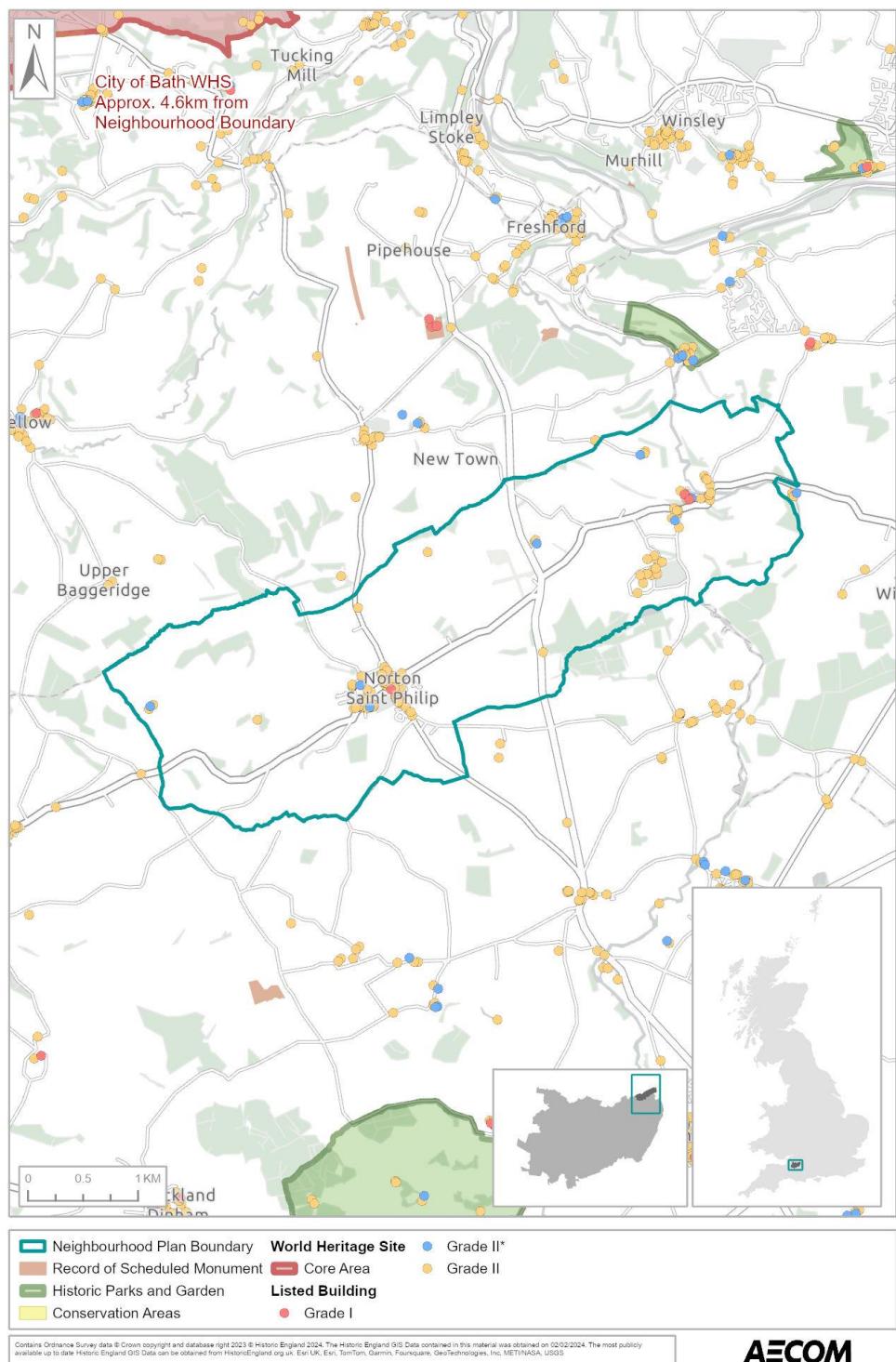


Figure 7.1: Historic environment considerations

Key statistics

- There are 135 listed buildings within the neighbourhood area: three Grade I, seven Grade II*, and 125 Grade II buildings. The Grade I listed buildings are [The George Inn](#), the [Chapel of St Leonard, perimeter wall and gateway](#) [Farleigh Castle](#), and the [Farleigh Hungerford Castle](#). It is noted that the Farleigh Hungerford Castle is also designated as a scheduled monument.
- There is an additional scheduled monument within the neighbourhood area, the [Dovecote 220m north of St Philip and St James's Church](#).
- There is one conservation area within the neighbourhood area boundary, the Norton St Philip Conservation Area.
- The Somerset Historic Environment Record (HER) returns 224 results for the neighbourhood area.

Key evidence sources

7.2 Evidence sources which have informed the development of key issues include:

- [DEFRA's MAGiC Map](#)
- [Heritage Gateway](#)
- [Historic England](#)
 - [Heritage at Risk Register 2023 – South West](#)
 - [Search the List - Advanced Search](#)
- [Somerset Council - Conservation Areas](#)
- [Somerset Historic Environment Record](#)
- [The on-line guide to Norton St Philip](#)

Policy context

Table 7.1: Additional plans and policies relating to the historic environment

Document title	Year of publication
Norton St Philip Conservation Area Appraisal	2007

Commentary

7.3 The earliest remaining sign of habitation in the Norton St Philip parish dates to the Roman period. The village of Norton St Philip has moved through the centuries with little to no historical changes to the layout and building structure. Furthermore, many of the family names included in the parish register of 1600 are still present in the area today. It is noted that the settlement was the setting for a battle in 1685 during the rebellion led by the Duke of Monmouth, though there is no registered battlefield designation in the area.

- 7.4 First designated in 1969, the Norton St Philip Conservation Area covers the historic core of the settlement. The associated Norton St Philip Conservation Area Appraisal, published in 2007, outlines the history and development of the village, the historical character of it, and key components that contribute to its historical significance. This includes (but is not limited to):
- The village's position on a ridge, which allows it to be visible from lower ground to the west.
 - 85 entries in the List of Buildings of Special Architectural or Historic Interest. accounting for individual buildings and groups of structures.
 - The tight-knit character of the settlement.
 - Structures presenting different local building patterns, for example, medieval plan forms, boundary treatments, and trees and green spaces.
- 7.5 The Norton St Philip Conservation Area Appraisal indicates that there are a number of detrimental features and sites that detract from the overall quality of the designation, including the effects of traffic, poles and wires.
- 7.6 Locally important, non-designated heritage assets are also an important part of the historic environment in the neighbourhood area. These features include (but are not limited to): archaeological finds (such as human bone and musket balls), enclosures and field systems, houses and structures, tombs / burial sites, and the remains of a deserted village.
- 7.7 It is noted the Norton St Philip neighbourhood area sits within the context of a wider historic landscape, including further listed buildings and scheduled monuments, registered parks and gardens, and the City of Bath World Heritage Site (WHS).

Key issues

- 7.8 There are a number of designated heritage features in the neighbourhood area, all of which present a constraint to future development due to the need to avoid impacts to the features and their settings. The Norton St Philip NP can help maintain and enhance the historic environment by ensuring that development is sensitive to the historic setting of the neighbourhood area in terms of design and layout.
- 7.9 The Norton St Philip Conservation Area Appraisal highlights the detrimental impact of specific features and sites within the historic core of the settlement. The Norton St Philip NP presents an opportunity to provide a growth strategy and supporting policy framework that works to protect and enhance the historic character of the conservation area. The protection and enhancement opportunities brought forward could also extend to non-designated assets and their settings.

SEA objective

7.10 Based on the key issues discussed above, it is proposed that the historic environment is **SCOPED IN** to the SEA. As such, the SEA should include the following objective and supporting assessment questions:

SEA theme	SEA objective
Historic environment	Protect, conserve, and enhance the historic environment within and surrounding the neighbourhood area.

7.11 Supporting assessment questions include (will the option / proposal...):

- Protect the integrity of the historic setting of the Norton St Philip Conservation Area?
- Conserve and enhance buildings and structures of architectural or historic interest, both designated and non-designated, and their settings?
- Protect the integrity of the historic setting of key monuments of cultural heritage interest as listed in the Somerset HER?
- Support the undertaking of early archaeological investigations and, where appropriate, recommend mitigation strategies?
- Support access to, interpretation and understanding of the historic evolution and character of the neighbourhood area?

8. Land, soil and water resources

- 8.1 This section seeks to summarise the quality of water resources, the extent of mineral resources, water supply resources, and water quality within and surrounding the neighbourhood area.

Maps

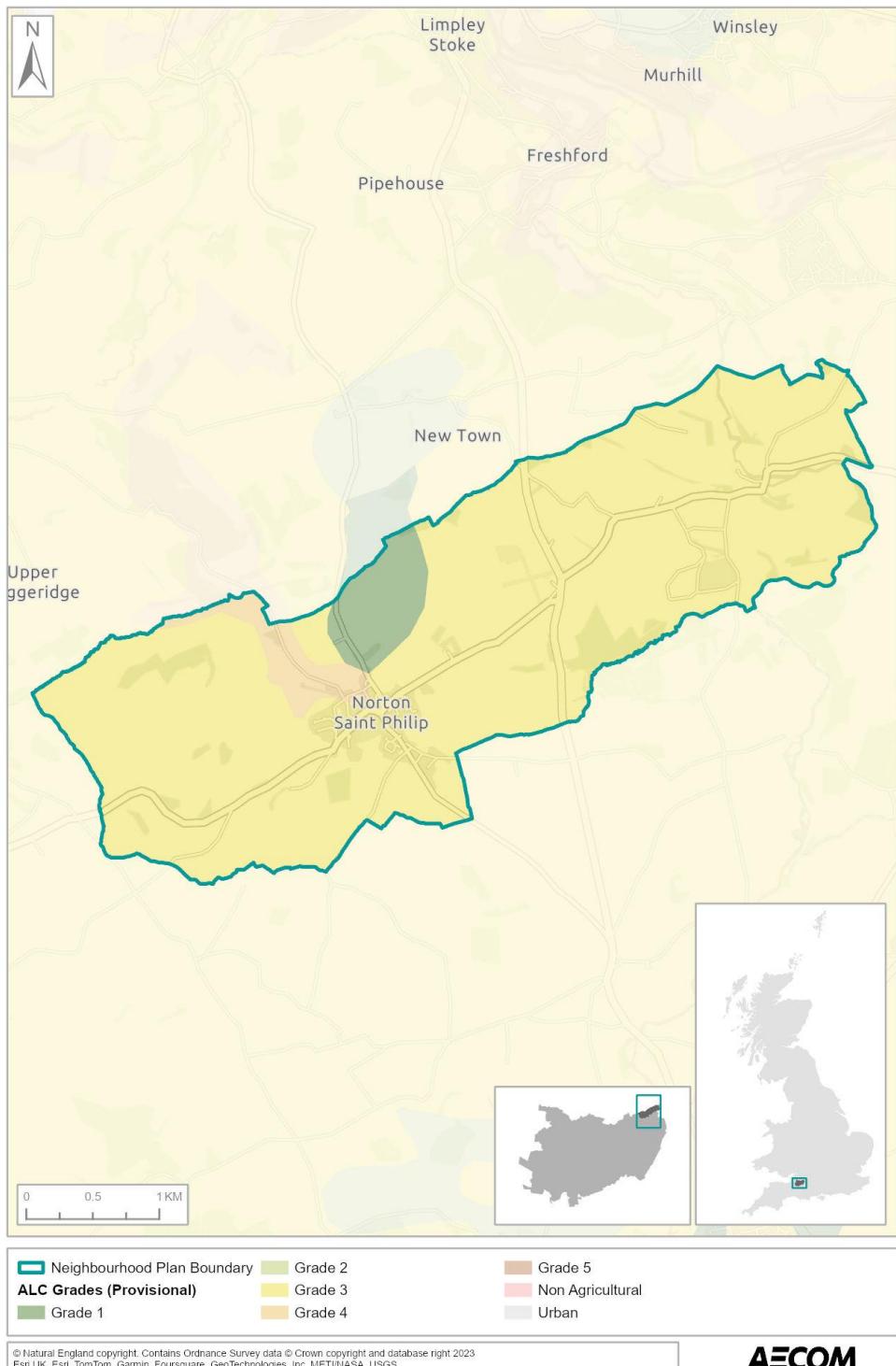


Figure 8.1: Provisional agricultural land classification (ALC)

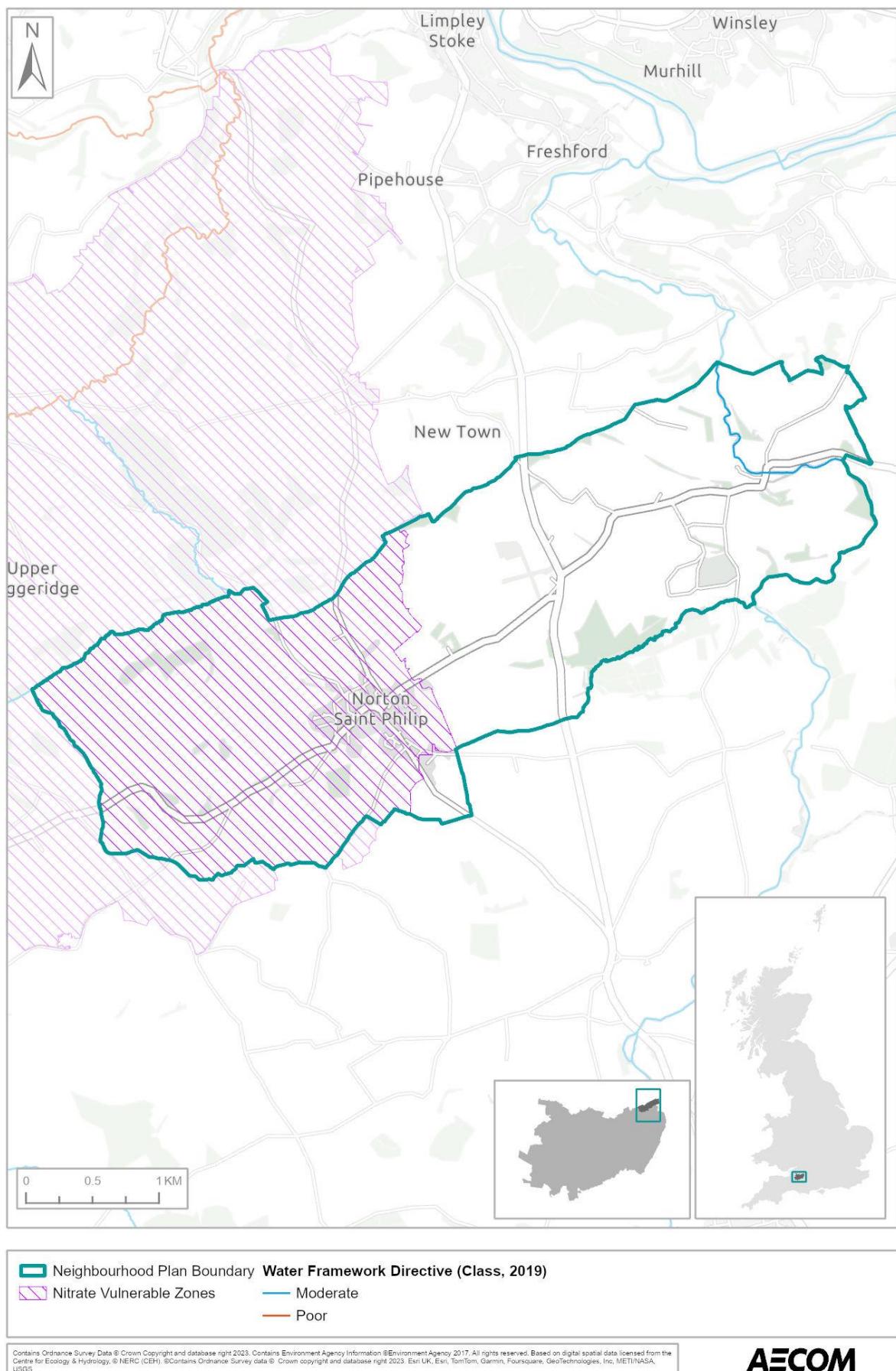


Figure 8.2: Water quality designations

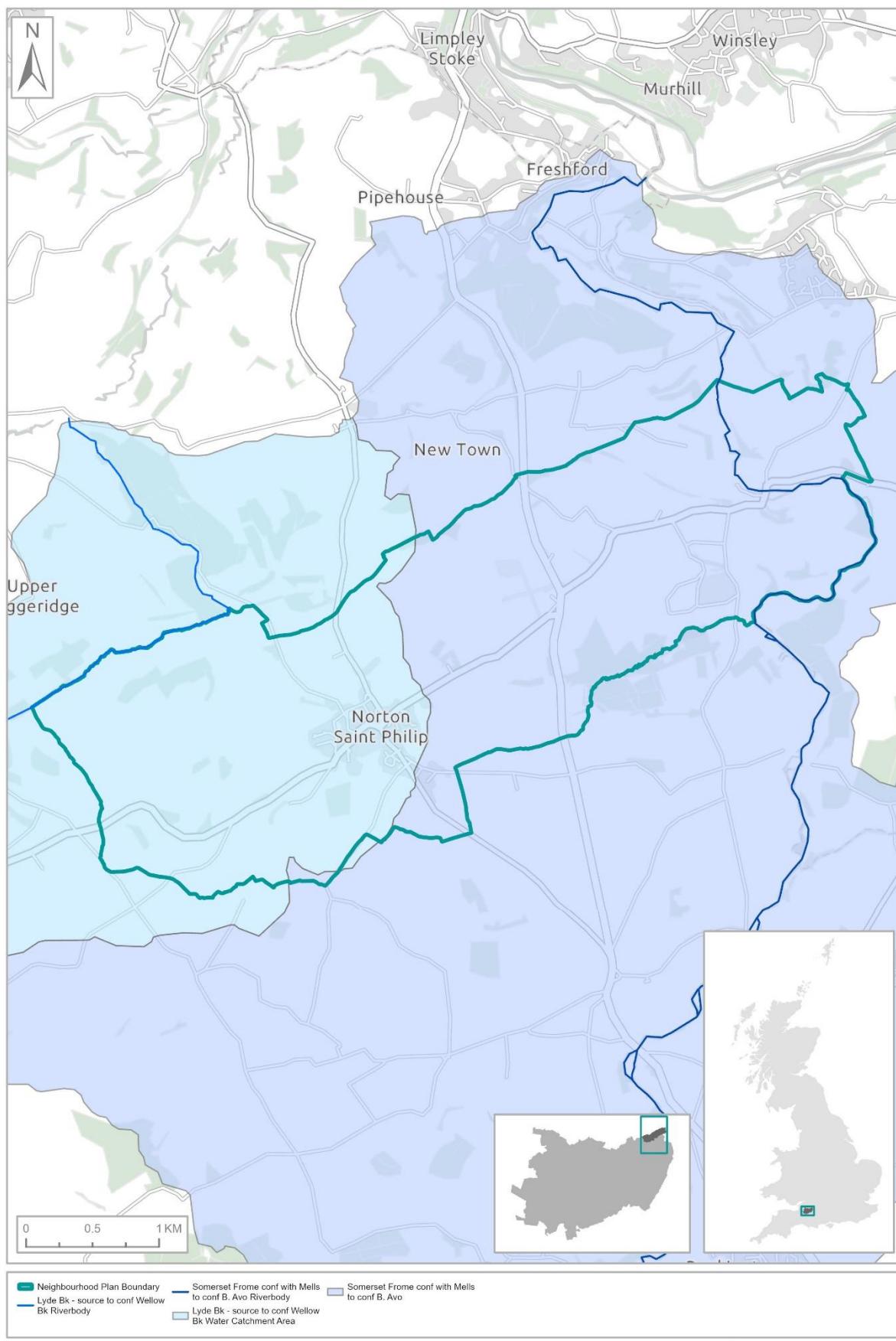
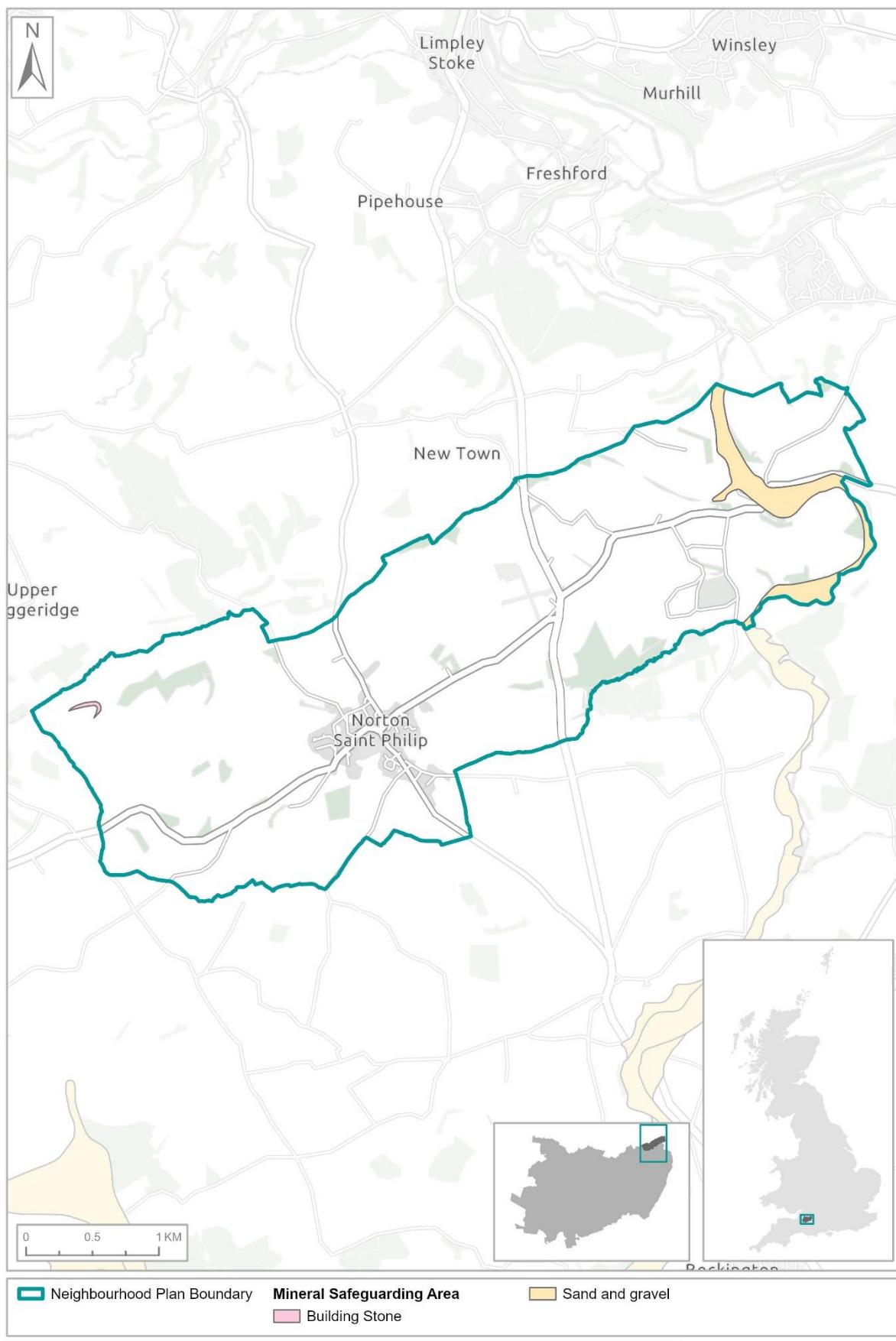


Figure 8.3: Water body catchment areas



AECOM

Figure 8.4: Mineral safeguarding areas

Key statistics

- The neighbourhood area falls within the Avon Bristol Rural operational catchment, and across two water body catchments. These are the Lyde Brook - source to conf Wellow Brook Water Body in the western third of the neighbourhood area, and the rest is within the Somerset Frome conf with Mells to conf B. Avo Water Body. Both have a moderate ecological status according to their most recent assessment.
- The western part of the neighbourhood area falls within a nitrate vulnerability zone (NVZ): Surface Water S566 - Wellow BK - conf Lyde Brook to conf Cam Brook.
- There is a sand and gravel safeguarding area within the Norton St Philip neighbourhood area; this is located in the eastern extent and is associated with the watercourse present.

Key evidence sources

8.2 Evidence sources which have informed the development of key issues include:

- [Catchment Data Explorer - Avon Bristol Rural Operational Catchment](#)
 - [Lyde Bk - source to conf Wellow Bk Water Body](#)
 - [Somerset Frome conf with Mells to conf B. Avo Water Body](#)
- [Check for Drinking Water Safeguard Zones and NVZs](#)
- [DEFRA's Magic Map](#)
- [Natural England - Regional Agricultural Land Classification Maps](#)
 - [Agricultural Land Classification Map South West Region \(ALC006\)](#)
 - [Likelihood of Best and Most Versatile \(BMV\) Agricultural Land - Strategic scale map South West Region \(ALC018\)](#)

Policy context

Table 8.1: Additional plans and policies relating to land, soil, and water resources

Document title	Year of publication
<u>Bristol Water - Water Resources Management Plan</u>	2019
<u>Wessex Water - Water Resources Management Plan</u>	2019
<u>Somerset Minerals Plan 2030</u>	2015
<u>Somerset Waste Core Strategy</u>	2013

Commentary

- 8.3 In the absence of an agricultural land classification (ALC) assessment, the provisional ALC dataset provided by Natural England has been used to assess the quality of the land in the Norton St Philip neighbourhood area. It indicates the majority of the neighbourhood area is classed as Grade 3 'Good to Moderate' agricultural land, with areas of Grade 1 'Excellent' and Grade 4 'Poor' to the north of Norton St Philip village. This indicates that the majority of the undeveloped neighbourhood area has the potential to support productive agricultural activity.
- 8.4 Historically, the Lyde Brook - source to confluence Wellow Brook Water Body catchment has largely had a moderate ecological status; however, the Somerset Frome confluence with Mells to confluence B. Avo Water Body catchment has had a poor to moderate ecological status over the examined years.
- 8.5 There is a sand and gravel safeguarding area within the neighbourhood area, located in the eastern extent. This is linked to the River Frome that runs through this part of the neighbourhood area. Given this, consultation with Somerset Council may be required, as development within the neighbourhood area could contribute to the sterilisation of this resource.

Key issues

- 8.6 Allocating land for development could influence changes to land, soil and water resources. It will be important for development to be focused away from undeveloped parts of Grade 1 ALC land. Development should be focused as close to the settlement boundaries to avoid a greater loss of productive agricultural land.
- 8.7 The neighbourhood area sits within two water body catchments. Given the current and historical ecological statuses of these two water body catchments, and the overlap of the neighbourhood area with the NVZ, it is clear water quality is an important consideration in this part of Somerset. Development through the Norton St Philip NP could impact upon the water body catchments and the NVZ through increased levels of pollutants entering the water system, linked to a greater built footprint in the neighbourhood area.
- 8.8 Given the neighbourhood area overlaps with a mineral safeguarding zone, consultation with Somerset Council will likely be required before development can be brought forward. Where possible, development should be steered away from the mineral safeguarding areas and should be considerate of local finite resources.

SEA objective

8.9 Based on the key issues discussed above, it is proposed that land, soil and water resources are **SCOPED IN** to the SEA. As such, the SEA should include the following objective and supporting assessment questions:

SEA theme	SEA objective
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.

8.10 Supporting assessment questions include (will the option / proposal...):

- Promote the use of previously developed land wherever possible?
- Identify and avoid the development of the best and most versatile agricultural land?
- Support the minimisation, reuse, and recycling of waste?
- Avoid any negative impacts on water quality and support improvements to water quality?
- Ensure appropriate drainage and mitigation is delivered alongside proposed development?
- Protect waterbodies from pollution?
- Maximise water efficiency and opportunities for water harvesting and/or water recycling?
- Avoid any negative impacts on mineral and waste infrastructure?

9. Landscape

9.1 This section seeks to summarise landscape character and key landscape features and sensitivities in the neighbourhood area.

Maps

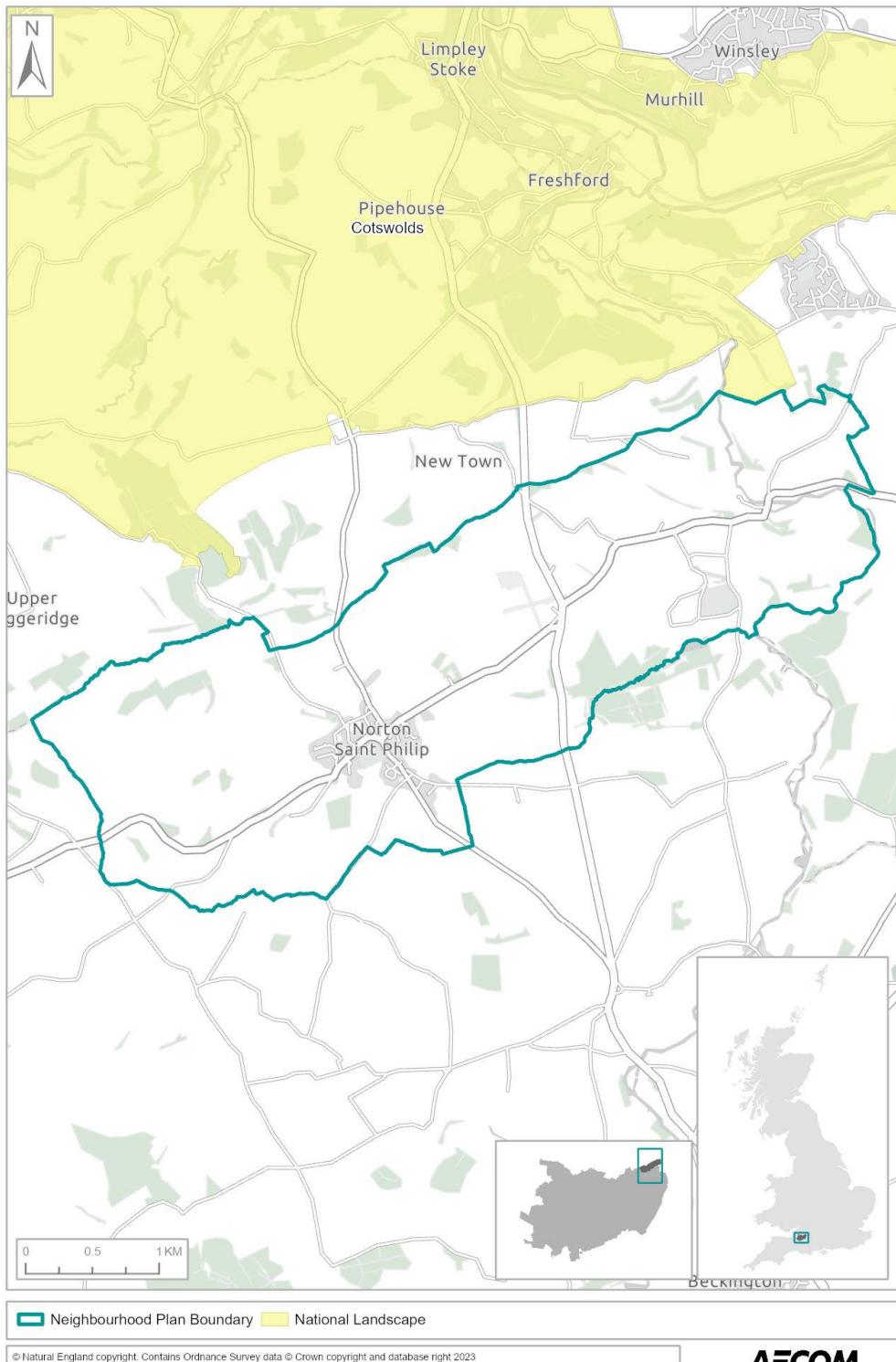


Figure 9.1: Cotswolds National Landscape relative to the neighbourhood area

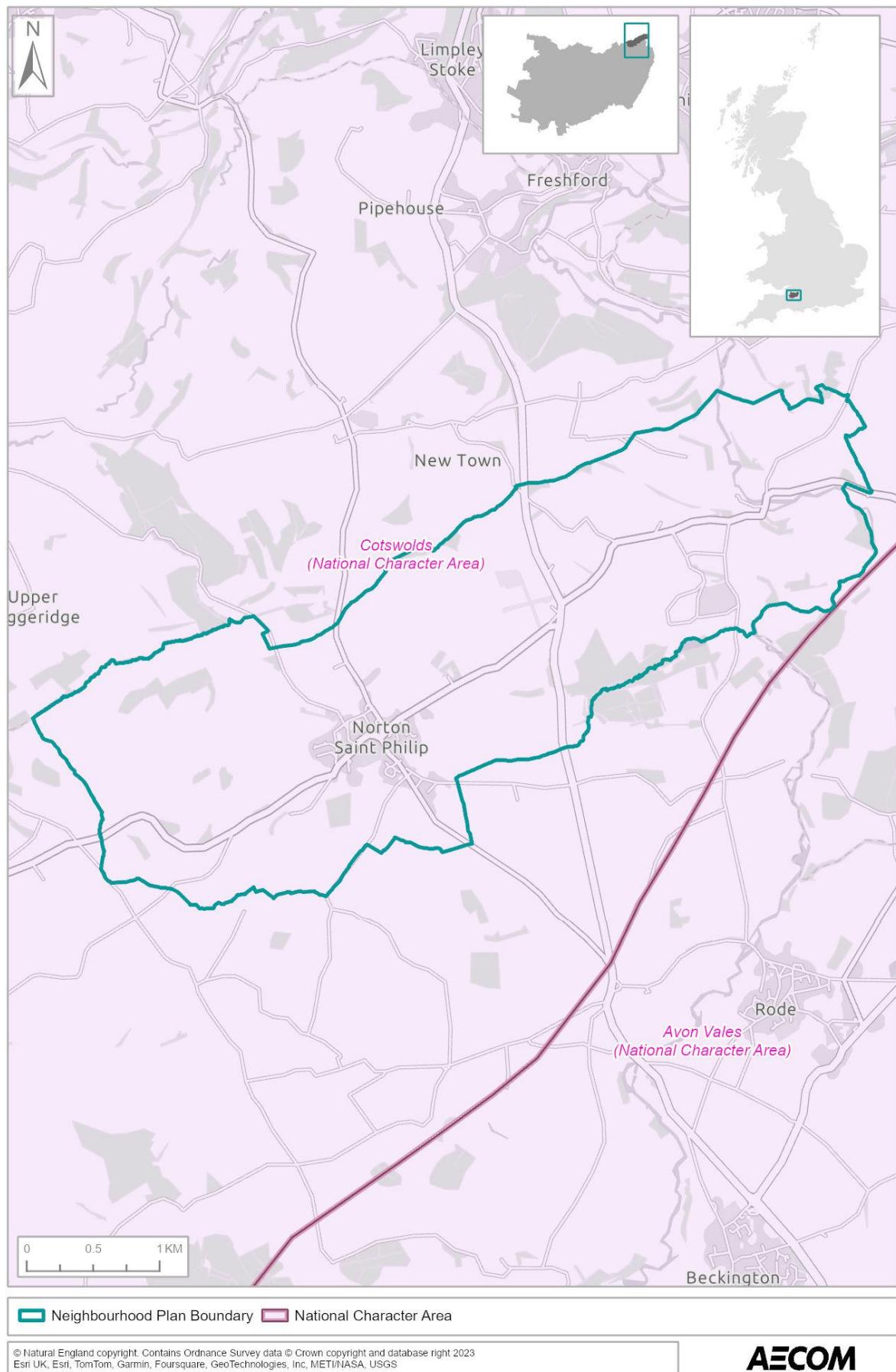


Figure 9.2: National Landscape Character Areas

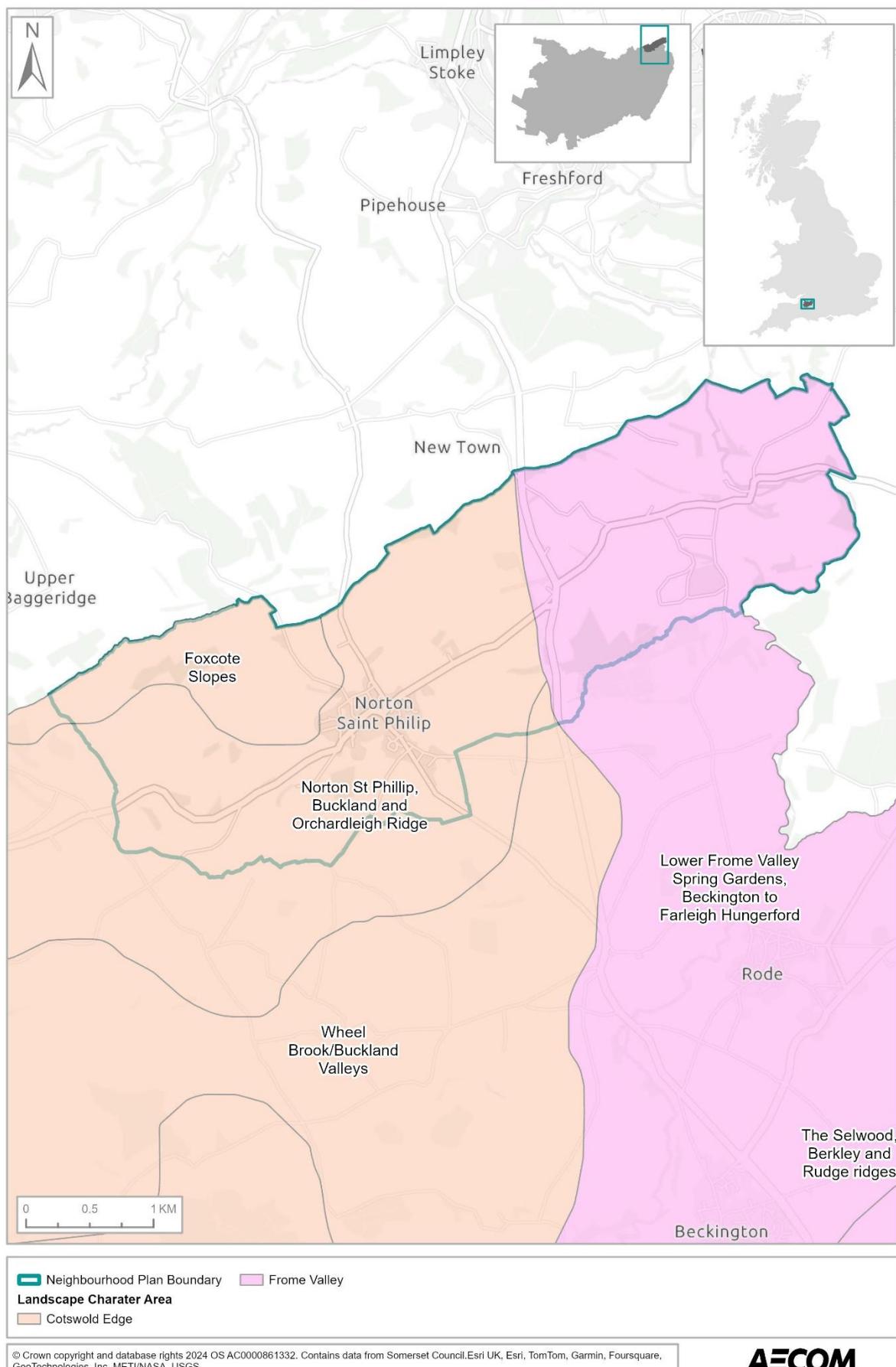


Figure 9.3: Local Landscape Character Areas

Key statistics

- There are a number of tree preservation orders (TPOs) within the neighbourhood area, within the village of Norton St Philip, and north of Farleigh Hungerford at Lodge Farm.
- The Cotswolds National Landscape (previously Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty, or AONB) is located to the north of the neighbourhood area.
- The neighbourhood area is fully within the Cotswolds National Character Area (NCA).
- The most recent local landscape character area (LCA) assessment indicates the neighbourhood area sits within two landscape types and three character areas.
- The Norton St Philip Character Assessment identifies seven character areas within the neighbourhood area.
- According to the most recent brownfield register (December 2023), there is one brownfield site within the neighbourhood area - the Bell Hill Garage.
- There is an extensive tree belt on Laverton Triangle that is an important contributor to landscape character in the neighbourhood area.

Key evidence sources

9.2 Evidence sources which have informed the development of key issues include:

- [DEFRA's MAGiC Map](#)
- [Norton St Philip - Tree Belt on Laverton Triangle](#)
- [Mendip District Landscape Character Assessment 2020](#)
- [Parish of Norton St Philip - Character Assessment](#)
- [Somerset Council - Brownfield Register](#)

Policy context

Table 9.1: Additional plans and policies relating to landscape

Document title	Year of publication
Cotswolds National Landscape Management Plan 2023-2025	2023
NCA Profile: 107 Cotswolds (NE420)	2014

Commentary

- 9.3 The Cotswolds National Landscape Management Plan sets out the policies for the management of the designation. The plan focuses on three interlinked key issues: the climate emergency, nature's decline and the ecological crisis, and health and societal changes. The management includes a number of special qualities, including (but not limited to):
- River valleys.
 - The underlying character of limestone geology.
 - Flower-rich grasslands; and
 - Distinctive dry stone walls.
- 9.4 Although the Cotswolds National Landscape does not overlap with the neighbourhood area, there are a number of key views between the designation and Norton St Philip neighbourhood area.
- 9.5 The neighbourhood area is entirely within the Cotswolds NCA. This landscape is characterised by wooded valleys, expansive views across the Severn and Avon Vales, and the limestone geology, which has been quarried and used locally in structures.
- 9.6 The Norton St Philip neighbourhood area is within the Frome Valley and Cotswold Edge landscape types according to the LCA, and the following character areas:
- B3: Lower Frome Valley Spring Gardens, Beckington to Farleigh Hungerford. This area is characterised by being a main river valley, with a modest scale river and flood plain landscape and areas of gently rolling plateau. There is limited woodland cover.
 - C1: Foxcote Slopes. This area is characterised by steep and complex slopes, with small scale valley streams, hedgerows and free standing field trees, and small blocks of woodland.
 - C2: Buckland / Norton St Philip / Orchardleigh Ridges. This area is characterised by elevated ridges, areas of ancient woodland and parkland, medium sized regular fields, and boundary treatments of Cotswold stone.
- 9.7 The Norton St Philip Character Assessment was published in 2023, and identifies seven character areas within the neighbourhood area: close-terrace cottages, leafy cottages, green corridors, post-war streets, Fortescue fields, informal mix, and Green Belt / traditional villages in the countryside. The assessment outlines development guidelines that should be followed in order to retain and enhance the character of the neighbourhood area.

Key issues

- 9.8 It will be important for the Norton St Philip NP to protect the local landscape, including its coherence and characteristics. This will bring benefits to other SEA themes, including biodiversity and climate change, by maintaining features which support wildlife and natural processes, such as gardens and areas of higher concentrations of trees.

- 9.9 Though not in the neighbourhood area, the Cotswolds National Landscape is located within proximity to the north. Given the proximity, it is likely development through the Norton St Philip NP will impact upon the setting of the designation. As such, the Norton St Philip NP should take into consideration the key objectives outlined in the Cotswolds National Landscape Management Plan, to ensure the designation is fully considered.
- 9.10 The Mendip District LCA assessment indicates the neighbourhood area sits within three different character areas. The key features contributing to these areas differ; as such, development through the Norton St Philip NP could help maintain or enhance local landscape character by encouraging development that is sensitive and considerate.
- 9.11 The Norton St Philip Character Assessment identifies seven character areas within the neighbourhood area. These distinct areas should be maintained and enhanced wherever possible through the Norton St Philip neighbourhood plan, so that the character of the neighbourhood area is protected.
- 9.12 There are a number of TPOs within the neighbourhood area, which are important landscape features that are also likely to contribute to visual amenity. New development through the Norton St Philip NP should avoid visual impacts to and from these TPOs where possible, in order to maintain the character and quality of the landscape in the neighbourhood area.

SEA objective

- 9.13 Based on the key issues discussed above, it is proposed that landscape is **SCOPED IN** to the SEA. As such, the SEA should include the following objective and supporting assessment questions:

SEA theme	SEA objective
Landscape	Protect and enhance the character and quality of the immediate and surrounding landscape.

- 9.14 Supporting assessment questions include (will the option / proposal...):

- Conserve and better reveal the significance of Cotswolds National Landscape?
- Protect and / or enhance local landscape character and quality of place?
- Conserve and enhance local identity, diversity, and settlement character?
- Identify and protect locally important viewpoints which contribute to character and sense of place?
- Retain and enhance landscape features that contribute to the landscape setting, including trees and hedgerows?

10. Transportation and movement

10.1 This section seeks to summarise transport infrastructure, transport usage, traffic flows and congestion, accessibility, and public rights of way within and surrounding the neighbourhood area.

Maps

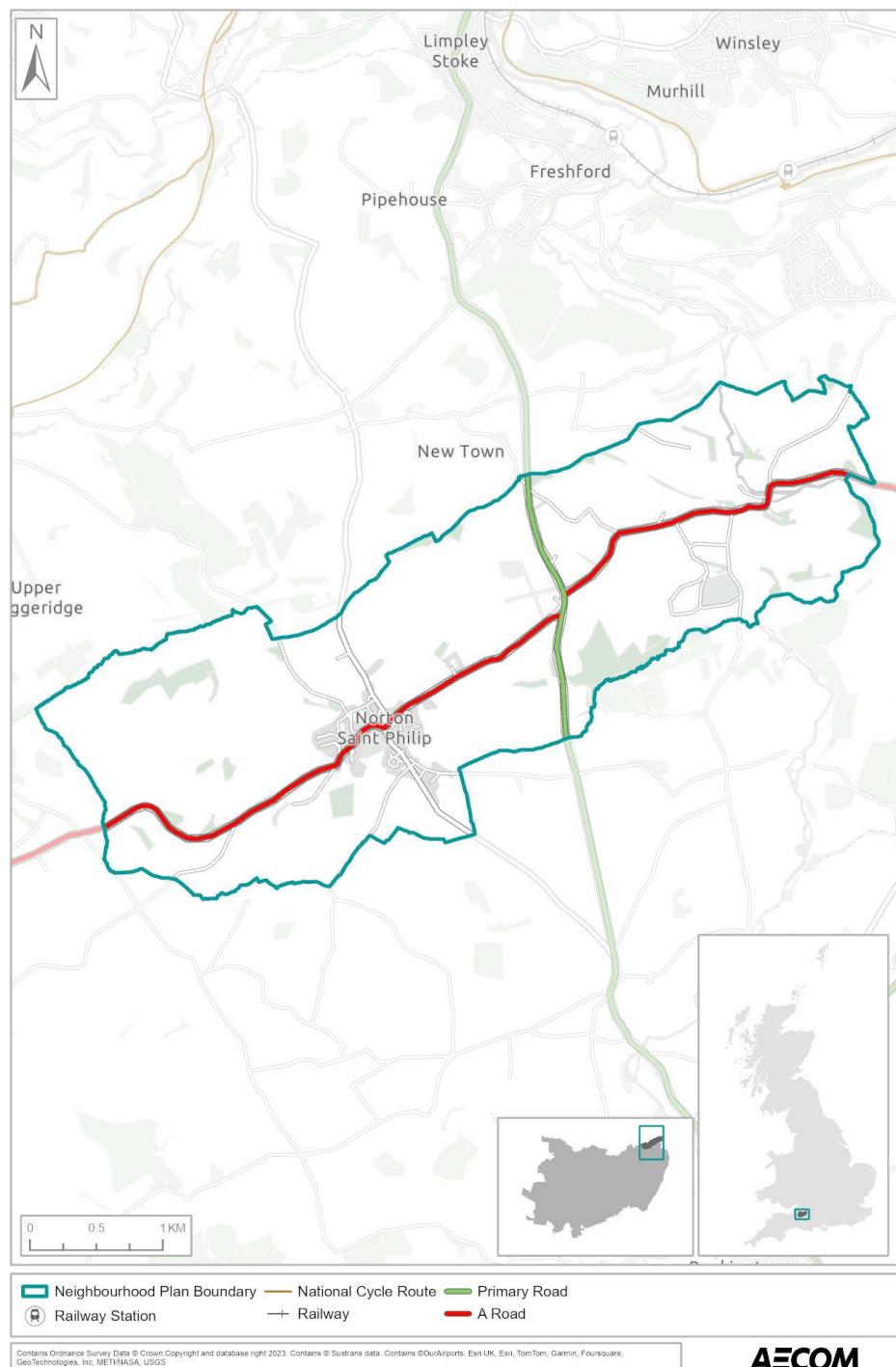


Figure 10.1: Transport infrastructure in the neighbourhood area

Key statistics

- Public transport opportunities are limited to one bus service in the neighbourhood, the D2 discoverer. Whilst there are no train stations within the neighbourhood area, there are several within a commutable distance with the closest stations at Freshford and Avoncliff.
- There are a number of public rights of ways (PRoWs) to allow for safe and active movement within the neighbourhood area, and to locations outside it. This includes public footpaths, bridleways, and restricted byways and their associated features, such as stiles and bridges.

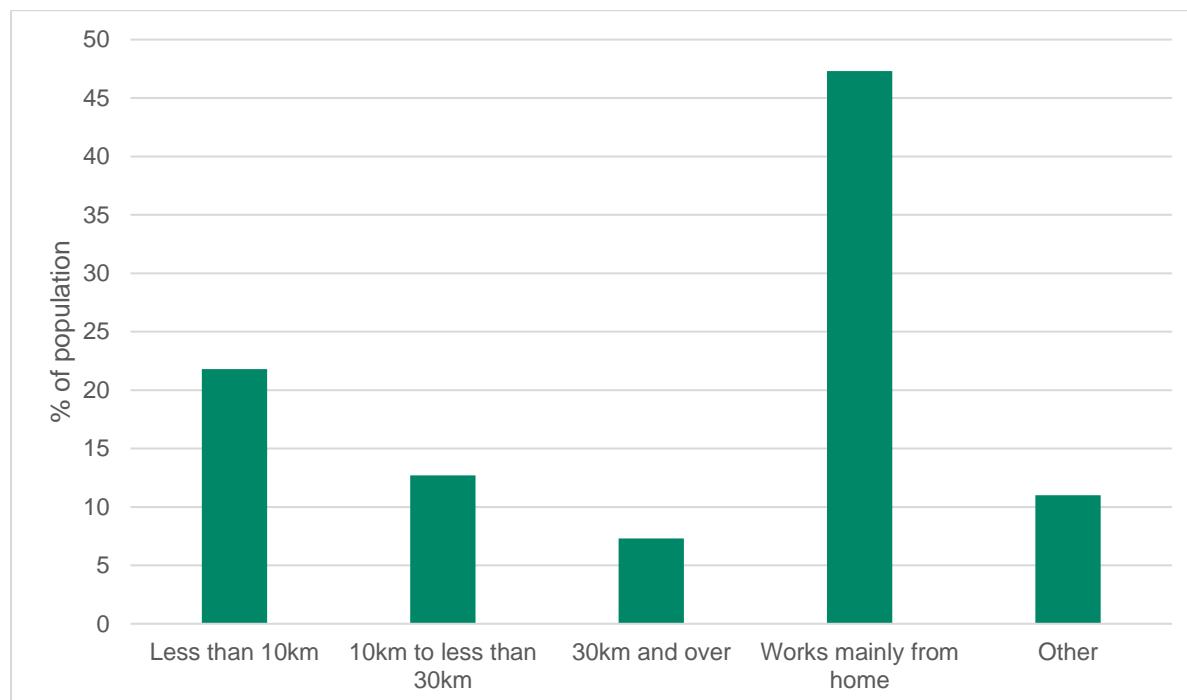


Figure 10.2: Distance travelled to work for working residents in the Norton St Philip neighbourhood area

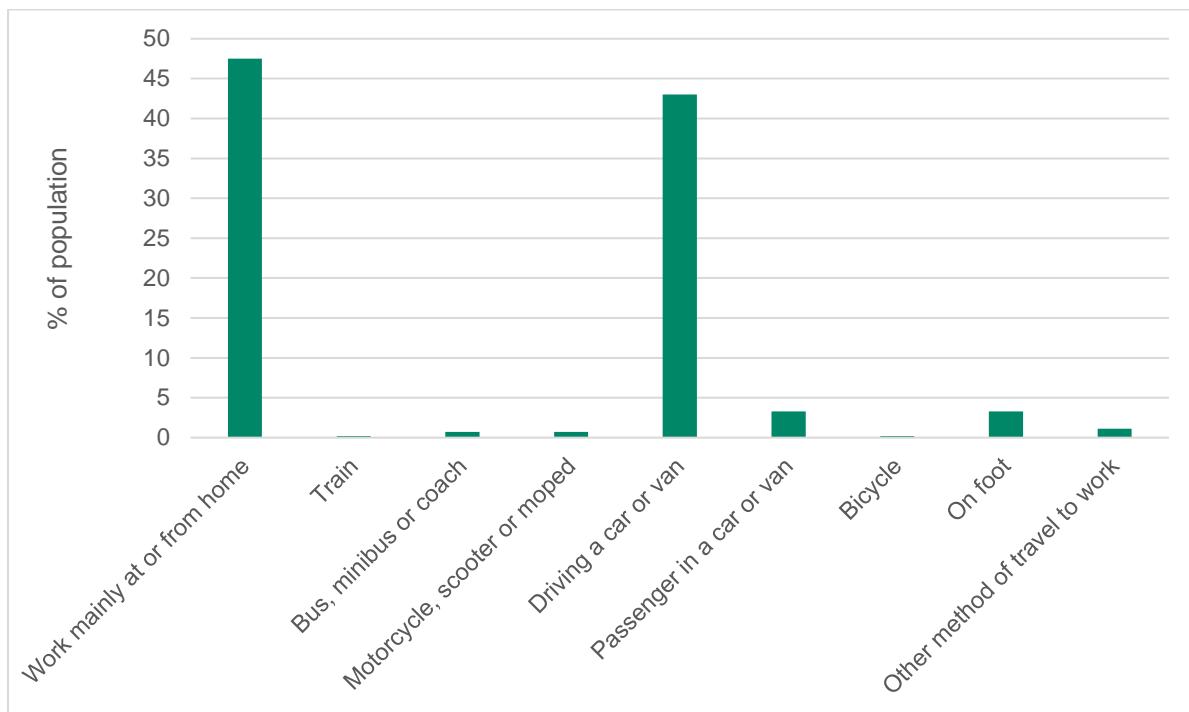


Figure 10.3: Method of transport to work for working residents in the Norton St Philip neighbourhood area

Key evidence sources

10.2 Evidence sources which have informed the development of key issues include:

- [Explore Somerset](#)
- [First Bus - D2 and D2x: Bath - Frome via St Martin's Hospital, Hinton Charterhouse, Norton St Philip and Beckington](#)
- [Google Maps](#)
- [Great Western Railway - Bath Spa](#)
- [Norton St Philip Parish Council - Traffic Day Consultation Report 2021](#)
- [Office for National Statistics - Census 2021 - Build a custom area profile](#)

Policy context

Table 10.1: Additional plans and policies relating to transportation and movement

Document title	Year of publication
Somerset's Future Transport Plan 2011-2026	2011

Commentary

- 10.3 There are no train stations within the Norton St Philip neighbourhood area. Bath Spa train station is located approximately 7.5km north-west of the neighbourhood area, and is the closest station that provides long distance rail links to a wide variety of locations. This includes (but is not limited to): Bristol Temple Meads, London Paddington, Weymouth, Gloucester, Portsmouth Harbour, and Cardiff Central. It is operated by Great Western Railway. The closest stations to the neighbourhood area including Norton St Philip and Farleigh Hungerford are at Freshford and Avoncliff.
- 10.4 The D2 discoverer is the bus service that runs through the neighbourhood area, with stops within and in proximity to the Norton St Philip settlement boundary. The D2 service runs approximately once every 80 minutes in both directions all week, including Sundays and public holidays.
- 10.5 Somerset Council have produced an interactive map to illustrate the PRoW provision across the county.⁹ According to this resource, footpaths, bridleways and restricted byways form the majority of the active transportation network within the neighbourhood area.
- 10.6 There is an A road that intersects the neighbourhood area in a broadly east-west direction; the A366, which connects Trowbridge to Radstock. There is also a secondary A36 running in a north-south direction, connecting Bath to Southampton. These routes are likely to be used the most by the residents of the neighbourhood area, to allow for access to additional services and facilities in other centres. It is noted the B3110 also serves the neighbourhood area, connecting the settlement of Norton St Philip to Bath to the north, and the A36 to the south. It is possible this road acts as a rat run at peak traffic times.
- 10.7 According to a 2021 report published by Norton St Philip parish council, concerns of the area include school bus stops, speeding, parking provision, and the school crossing on Church Street. Recommendations were put forward to address these concerns, including increased signage, monitoring, and training of volunteers.

Key issues

- 10.8 As the Norton St Philip NP is seeking to allocate sites for development, there will be an inevitable change in the current transportation and movement baseline. Given the limited sustainable transport options within the neighbourhood area, it is likely the change will be focused around an increase in private vehicles on the local road network. This could contribute to congestion and emission levels in the neighbourhood area.
- 10.9 An increase in vehicles on the road could further exacerbate the highlighted concerns of residents in the neighbourhood area, including parking and speeding.

⁹ Somerset Council [Explore Somerset Interactive Map](#)

SEA objective

10.10 Based on the key issues discussed above, it is proposed that transportation and movement is **SCOPED IN** to the SEA. As such, the SEA should include the following objective and supporting assessment questions:

SEA theme	SEA objective
Transportation	Promote sustainable transport use and active travel opportunities and reduce the need to travel.

10.11 Supporting assessment questions include (will the option / proposal...):

- Support the objectives within the Somerset Future Transport Plan to encourage the use of more sustainable transport modes?
- Encourage a shift to more sustainable forms of travel and enable sustainable transport infrastructure enhancements?
- Improve local connectivity and pedestrian and cyclist movement?
- Facilitate working from home to reduce the use of private vehicles to access workplaces outside of the neighbourhood area?
- Reduce the impact of the transport sector on climate change?
- Improve road safety?
- Reduce the impact on residents from the road network?

11. Proposed SEA framework

- 11.1 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 explored for a range of SEA topics (as set out in Chapters 3 to 10).
- 11.2 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 Norton St Philip NP (and reasonable alternatives).
- 11.3 **Table 11.1** below outlines the proposed SEA framework, bringing together the objectives and assessment questions that have been set out at the end of each SEA topic.

Table 11.1: The SEA framework

SEA theme	SEA objective	Supporting assessment questions
Biodiversity and geodiversity	Protect and enhance biodiversity and geodiversity.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Protect and enhance nationally and locally designated sites, including supporting habitats and mobile species that are important to the integrity of these sites?• Protect and enhance semi-natural habitats as well as priority habitats and species?• Achieve biodiversity and environmental net gains and support the delivery of ecosystem services and multifunctional green infrastructure networks?• Increase the resilience of biodiversity in the area to the effects of climate change, including through enhancements to ecological networks?• Support access to, interpretation and understanding of biodiversity and geodiversity?
Climate change and flood risk	Reduce the contribution to climate change made by activities within the neighbourhood area and increase resilience to the potential effects of climate change.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Avoid vulnerable development in areas of high flood risk, taking into account the likely future effects of climate change?• Reduce the number of journeys made and reduce the need to travel?• Promote the use of more sustainable modes of transport, including walking, cycling, public transport, and electric vehicle (EV) infrastructure?• Increase the number of new developments meeting or exceeding sustainable design criteria?• Generate energy from low or zero carbon sources, or reduce energy consumption from non-renewable resources?

SEA theme	SEA objective	Supporting assessment questions
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure that development does not come forward in areas at higher risk of flooding, considering the likely future effects of climate change? • Improve and extend green infrastructure networks in the neighbourhood area? • Sustainably manage water run-off, reducing runoff where possible? • Increase the resilience of biodiversity in the area to the effects of climate change, including through enhancements to ecological networks?
Community wellbeing	Ensure growth in the neighbourhood area is aligned with the needs of all residents, improving accessibility, anticipating future needs and specialist requirements, and supporting cohesive and inclusive communities.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide everyone with the opportunity to live in good quality, affordable housing? • Support the provision of a range of house types and sizes? • Meet the needs of all sectors of the community? • Deliver new facilities to reduce the need to travel outside the neighbourhood area? • Provide flexible and adaptable homes that meet people's needs, particularly the needs of an ageing population? • Improve the availability and accessibility of key local facilities, including health infrastructure? • Encourage and promote social cohesion and active involvement of local people in community activities? • Facilitate green infrastructure enhancements, including improved access to open space? • Maintain or enhance the quality of life of existing residents?
Historic environment	Protect, conserve, and enhance the historic environment within and surrounding the neighbourhood area.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Protect the integrity of the historic setting of the Norton St Philip Conservation Area? • Conserve and enhance buildings and structures of architectural or historic interest, both designated and non-designated, and their settings? • Protect the integrity of the historic setting of key monuments of cultural heritage interest as listed in the Somerset HER? • Support the undertaking of early archaeological investigations and, where appropriate, recommend mitigation strategies? • Support access to, interpretation and understanding of the historic evolution and character of the neighbourhood area?

SEA theme	SEA objective	Supporting assessment questions
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"> • Promote the use of previously developed land wherever possible? • Identify and avoid the development of the best and most versatile agricultural land? • Support the minimisation, reuse, and recycling of waste? • Avoid any negative impacts on water quality and support improvements to water quality? • Ensure appropriate drainage and mitigation is delivered alongside proposed development? • Protect waterbodies from pollution? • Maximise water efficiency and opportunities for water harvesting and/or water recycling? • Avoid any negative impacts on mineral and waste infrastructure?
Landscape	Protect and enhance the character and quality of the immediate and surrounding landscape.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conserve and better reveal the significance of Cotswolds National Landscape? • Protect and / or enhance local landscape character and quality of place? • Conserve and enhance local identity, diversity, and settlement character? • Identify and protect locally important viewpoints which contribute to character and sense of place? • Retain and enhance landscape features that contribute to the landscape setting, including trees and hedgerows?
Transportation	Promote sustainable transport use and active travel opportunities and reduce the need to travel.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support the objectives within the Somerset Future Transport Plan to encourage the use of more sustainable transport modes? • Encourage a shift to more sustainable forms of travel and enable sustainable transport infrastructure enhancements? • Improve local connectivity and pedestrian and cyclist movement? • Facilitate working from home to reduce the use of private vehicles to access workplaces outside of the neighbourhood area? • Reduce the impact of the transport sector on climate change? • Improve road safety? • Reduce the impact on residents from the road network?

12. Next Steps

Subsequent stages for the SEA process

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

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

12.2 The next stage will involve appraising reasonable alternatives for the Norton St Philip Neighbourhood Plan. The findings of the appraisal of these alternatives will be fed back to the Norton St Philip Parish Council so that they may be considered when preparing the draft Norton St Philip NP.

12.3 Once the draft ('pre-submission version') plan has been prepared, it will be subjected to SEA, and the prepared Environmental Report will go out to consultation alongside it.

12.4 Following consultation on the draft Norton St Philip NP and the Environmental Report, the Norton St Philip Neighbourhood Plan will be finalised and submitted to Somerset Council for Independent Examination.

Consultation on the Scoping Report

12.5 At this scoping stage, the SEA Regulations require consultation with statutory consultation bodies. The statutory consultation bodies are the Environment Agency, Historic England, and Natural England. Consultees are invited to comment on the content of this Scoping Report; in particular, the evidence base for the SEA, the identified key issues, and the proposed SEA framework.

12.6 The consultation period runs from 01.05.2024 to 05.06.2024. Comments on the Scoping Report should be sent to:

Ishaq Khan, AECOM

Email address: ishaq.khan@aecom.com

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

