

# East Dorset New Neighbourhoods

## Stage 1 Baseline Report

Client: East Dorset District Council

Ref: 27020-06

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# East Dorset New Neighbourhoods

## Stage 1 Baseline Report – Additional Sites

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# 1 Introduction

## 1.1 Background

This report has been prepared by Broadway Malyan for East Dorset District Council (EDDC) and provides the baseline analysis for two potential housing locations in the District. This report follows on from the Stage 1 Housing Options Masterplanning reports produced by Broadway Malyan in November 2010 which explored suitable locations for new residential neighbourhoods on the edge of the settlements of Wimborne Minster, Corfe Mullen, West Parley/ Ferndown and Verwood.

The previous Stage 1 reports looked at a number of housing locations and these were subsequently taken forward for public consultation in the Council's Joint Core Strategy document (entitled "Options for Consideration") between October 2010 and January 2011. The response to this consultation exercise provided feedback on the new neighbourhoods put forward in the Core Strategy and also suggested two additional sites for consideration which are now assessed in this document.

The two sites are:

- Land off Ringwood Road, Verwood
- The Bluebird Social Club and adjacent land, Longham

## 1.2 This report

This report provides an overview of both new sites, covering the following

- Site details
- Policy background
- Constraints and opportunities
- Transport and access
- Conclusions

## **2 Site details**

### **2.1 Land off Ringwood Road, Verwood**

#### **2.1.1 Location**

The site is located in the south-east of the settlement of Verwood. It is accessed via Parkland Close which subsequently connects to the B3081.

Parkland Close is narrow and is used to access the existing properties to the south of the site. It narrows further towards the north west end (where the access to the site could potentially be taken from).

The site is surrounded by Ringwood Forest to the north east and north west, most of which is plantation woodland. The site is located close to the Ebblake Industrial Area, which is the main employment area in Verwood. However, it is remote from the main services and facilities (approx. 2km) in the town.

#### **2.1.2 Description**

The site covers an area of 3.52 ha and lies in the Green Belt. The site is visually contained as it is bordered by housing on two sides (south east and south west) and Ringwood Forest on the other two sides (north east and north west).

The site comprises open green space, which used to be a sports playing field. However, the site is no longer used for this purpose. The site also contains part of the Ringwood Forest plantation within its boundaries

The site boundaries are shown on the plan overleaf.

Contractors are not to scale dimensions from this drawing



**Client** East Dorset District Council

**Project** Stage 1 Baseline Report - Additional Sites

**Description** Fig 1 - Land Off Ringwood Road - Site Boundary

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**Date** Nov 2011

**Revision**

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Figure 1 Land off Ringwood Road, Verwood

## **2.2 Bluebird Social Club and adjacent land, Longham**

### **2.2.1 Location**

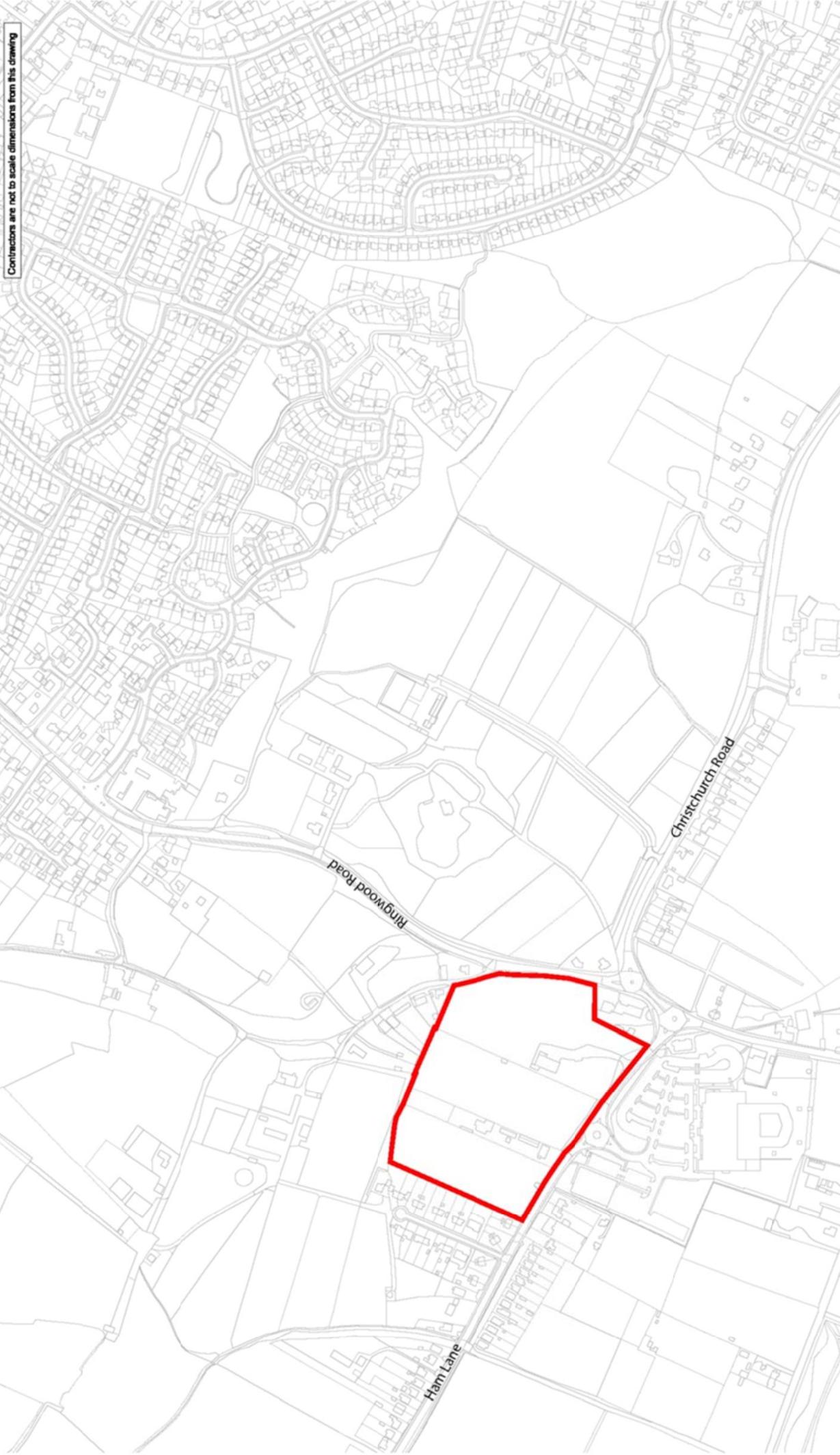
The site is located in Longham, a small settlement which lies to the south-west of the town of Ferndown. The site is bordered to the south by Haskins Garden Centre and to the west by a small residential development. To the east runs the A348, whilst land further east comprises Holmwood House and its grounds. Land to the north consists of open fields with a scattering of residential units. The site lies to the north of Hampreston Road.

### **2.2.2 Description**

The site covers a combined area of approximately 5.04 ha and lies in the Green Belt. The site comprises two areas. The first is the Bluebird Social Club in the east which comprises a building set within open land with a row of mature trees running down its western boundary. The western half of the site comprises open land with a linear row of buildings running in a north-south direction, thus dissecting this part of the site in two.

The United Reform Church lies to the south east of the site.

The site boundaries are shown on the plan overleaf.



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Client	East Dorset District Council
Project	Stage 1 Baseline Report - Additional Sites
Description	Fig 2 - Bluebird Social Club & Adjacent Land - Site Boundary

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Figure 2 Bluebird Social Club and adjacent land, Longham

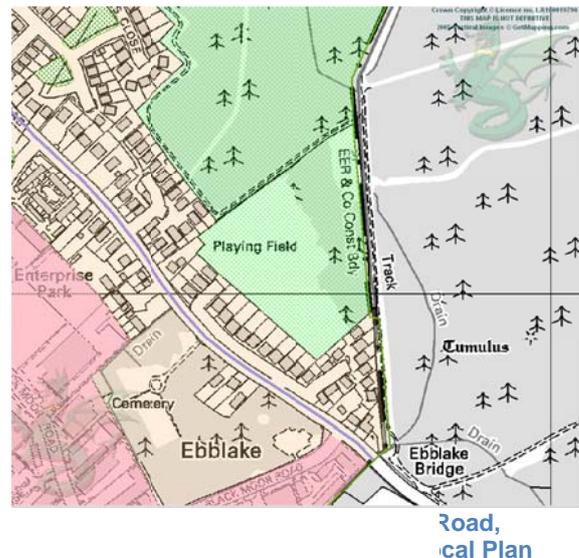
### 3 Policy background

#### 3.1 Land off Ringwood Road, Verwood

##### 3.1.1 Existing adopted local plan

The site lies within the existing Green Belt, as defined in the East Dorset Local Plan and is outside of the current settlement boundary for Verwood. Policies GB1 and GB2 relating to Green Belts in the current Local Plan have not been saved and are, therefore, no longer a material consideration. Policy GB3 has been saved but only relates to extensions to or replacements of dwellings in the Green Belt.

Prior to the adoption of the local plan, the Planning Inspector had positive comments on the site. He stated that the woodland to the north of the site would make a good defensible boundary for the Green Belt and edge to the town. It was also stated that the former use of the site as a playing field ceased many years ago and, therefore, the development of the site would not constitute a loss of facilities.



##### 3.1.2 SHLAA

The site is identified in the SHLAA as having the potential to accommodate approximately 62 units in years 6 to 10 of the plan period at an average density of 30 dwellings per hectare.

##### 3.1.3 Core Strategy feedback

The site was suggested as a housing site for Verwood during the Core Strategy “Options for Consideration” consultation by the Trustees and developers of the land. They stated that all other sites considered for Verwood were in the west of the settlement and the accompanying SANG provision would, therefore, only serve residents to the west and not relieve pressure on the heathland to the east.

#### 3.2 Bluebird Social Club, Longham

##### 3.2.1 Local plan

The site lies within the existing Green Belt, as defined in the East Dorset Local Plan and is outside of the current settlement boundary for Longham. As stated earlier, policies GB1 and GB2 relating to Green Belts in the Local Plan have not been saved and are, therefore, no longer a material consideration.

### 3.2.2 SHLAA

The site is identified in the SHLAA, though it has been split into two areas – one for the Bluebird Social Club and the other for the remainder of the site, plus other surrounding land. However, the SHLAA states that the site is wholly outside or unrelated to the defined settlement list. The site is also located wholly within the Green Belt. In conclusion the potential net supply of dwellings on the site over the plan period was estimated at zero.



### 3.2.3 Core Strategy feedback

Plans were submitted for the site during the Core Strategy “Options for Consideration” consultation. The partnership who submitted the plans objected to the proposed area of search in Ferndown and West Parley. They felt development at the village of Longham should also be considered under the area of search as the village has a good number of facilities to support extra development. They felt the proposed site was well located with regard to the existing urban form and would be a suitable location for a mixed use development including community facilities.

### 3.2.4 Green Belt

The site is currently located within the Green Belt and there are “Key Gaps” to the south of Ferndown to avoid coalescence with the urban area of Bournemouth. However, Longham itself is too small to be identified as a separate settlement within the South East Dorset Green Belt Review and it is shown as being “within the Green Belt” which infers that only limited development would be appropriate in this area.

## 4 Constraints and opportunities

### 4.1 Introduction

This section examines the constraints and opportunities associated with each site. It covers the following:

- Landscape
- Ecology
- Archaeology – Historic Environment
- Flood risk
- Infrastructure

### 4.2 Landscape

#### 4.2.1 Methodology

A high level appraisal was undertaken predominantly through a site visit and a review of the previous baseline reports. The purpose of this was to analyse the site's features and the overall landscape and townscape setting of Longham and Ferndown as well as the site at Verwood,

Particular assessment was made of the value of land contributing to the sense of gap between the settlements at Longham.

#### 4.2.2 Bluebird Social Club and adjacent land

##### *Description*

The land either side of the A348 between Longham and Ferndown straddles two broad landscape character areas: the open, generally level agricultural landscape associated with the Bluebird Social Club to the west and the gently rising and wooded landscape to the east around Holmwood House.

The area associated with Holmwood House contains parkland, a former walled garden and land used as pony paddocks as part of an Equestrian Centre. The area is bounded by well-established trees and woodland so that even in winter, views of the house from Ringwood Road are obscured. The park is covered by a Tree Preservation Order (TPO).

Land to the west of Ringwood Road is more mixed in character. At the Bluebird Social Club, fields north of Ham Lane are sub-divided into large rectangular areas, arranged in a north-south direction and strongly defined by tree belts. North of here, the character becomes more informal with development accessed off Pompey's Lane, which is aligned at an angle off Ringwood Road. Woodland lies to the north of this area.

Longham is a ribbon settlement, with parcels of residential development, garages and car-dealerships strung out along the A348. It is only at the roundabout junction with the B3073 overlooked by the United Reform Church at Longham that the end of the village is perceived for road users travelling north.

##### *Opportunities & constraints for development*

Constraints on development within this area largely relate to the function that the landscape provides in providing a gap between Longham and Ferndown. The gap between these settlements is mainly perceived as one travels along the A348. Travelling north, it can be regarded as the distance between the edge of Longham, signalled by the

prominent United Reform Church and the beginning of Ferndown which is signalled by The Angel Inn public house on the southern edge of Ferndown. The road's slightly meandering alignment and its wooded context also assist in providing separation between the settlements.

Land either side of the road would need to be essentially open to maintain this perception of "gap". The broad area and setting is as shown on Figure 5. West of the A348, the gap would extend as a minimum to the first two parcels of land. East of the A348, land would need to include the wooded grounds of Holmwood House, which as well as being an important landscape asset in their own right, assist in supporting the perception of gap through the open character and visual separation the woodland provides.

Development could occur further east of Holmwood House without comprising the gap as long as woodland is retained and new planting is proposed to create a strong landscape framework. Access from Ringwood Road would result in the least landscape impact if the existing Business Park access could be used.

#### **4.2.3 Land off Ringwood Road, Verwood**

##### ***Description***

The site is well contained by Ringwood Forest to the east and housing on the western edge. It is a largely level site lying at approximately 25m AOD. A single tree sits within the otherwise open site.

##### ***Opportunities & constraints for development***

There are no landscape constraints to the principle of development.

Contractions are not to scale dimensions from this drawing



Ferndown

Angel Inn

Holmwood House & Park

Broad area required to retain sense of gap

Broad area required to retain sense of gap

A348

United Reform Church

Longham

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Client East Dorset District Council

Project Stage 1 Baseline Report - Additional Sites

Description Fig 5 - Ferndown/ Longham Green Gap

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Figure 5 Ferndown / Longham Green Gap

## 4.3 Ecology

### 4.3.1 Method

The approach to ecological constraints and opportunities analysis is primarily high level and is based on a desk study of ecological designations (both statutory and non-statutory), a review of the Dorset Heathlands Interim Planning Framework (IPF) and the latest position of the emerging Core Strategy Habitats Regulations Assessment (HRA) work being undertaken by Land Use Consultants with respect to the Dorset Heaths SPA, and a review of other available information concerning the study areas.

This section identifies a framework for green infrastructure retention/enhancement and suitable alternative natural green space (SANGS) provision either on-site or off-site (or a combination thereof). This approach will minimise ecological risk in the future. Further ecological baseline assessments will be required in order to inform more detailed designs. At this stage it seems likely that such work would include Phase I Habitat Surveys, protected species surveys, vegetation, hedgerow and tree surveys, identification of UK and local Biodiversity Action Plan (BAP) priority habitats etc. In order to maximise ecological opportunities, consideration will also need to be given to the Dorset BAP objectives when devising bespoke ecological mitigation strategies for the new neighbourhoods in order to demonstrate biodiversity gain. The delivery of SANGS is likely to be a major contributor in demonstrating biodiversity gain.

### 4.3.2 Land off Ringwood Road, Verwood

#### ***Statutory Designations***

There are no statutory ecological designations within the site boundary. There are a number of other statutory ecological designations within 5km of the site including the parcels of land that comprise the Dorset Heathlands Special Protection Area (SPA) / Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI). The closest internationally designated sites, Verwood Heath and Ebblake Bog, are approximately 0.7km and 0.8km from the site respectively.

#### ***Local Non-Statutory Designations***

There are no non-statutory ecological designations within the site boundary. However, there are a number of non-statutory ecological designations (Sites of Nature Conservation Interest) within 5km of the site. Of these the closest to the site are Boveridge Heath SNCI, which comprises two areas of remnant heath, and Potterne Wood SNCI, an area of oak and birch woodland. Both of these sites lie within 1km of the site.

#### ***Important Features***

While the site appears to be relatively uniform in nature, it is possible that important ecological features may be present within the site itself, or within the surrounding area. Given its position in the landscape, at the interface of the urban area of Verwood and the more rural landscape of Ringwood Forest, this site has the potential to be used by a subset of species commonly found in urban areas and those commonly found in rural areas. It is possible that this sub-set of species may include common, protected and rare species (including UK and Local BAP species) and the site may be of value to the movement of species across the landscape.

#### ***Protected Species***

The study area may contain habitats which are suitable to support a range of protected species. While it is impossible to predict what species could potentially be present without knowing the outcome of an extended phase 1 survey, it is possible that the site may

contain breeding birds, reptiles, bats, invertebrates and badger and great crested newts within certain distances. Therefore, it is likely that further surveys will be required to establish presence or likely absence of these groups/species.

The ecological constraints relating to this site are shown in figure 6, later in this report.

#### **4.3.3 Bluebird Social Club, Longham**

##### ***Statutory Designations***

There are no statutory ecological designations within the site boundary. There are three sites with an international designation within 5km of the site, the closest of which, Ferndown Common, is approximately 0.8km north of the site. Leigh Common Local Nature Reserve is situated 3.7km north-west of the site. Moors River system SSSI is approximately 4.1km north-east of the site.

##### ***Local Non-Statutory Designations***

There are 10 sites with a non-statutory ecological designation within 5km of the site. All of these have been designated as Sites of Nature Conservation Interest (SNCI). The closest of these is Big Copse which is approximately 0.6km from the site. Leigh Common Local Nature Reserve is also designated as a SNCI.

##### ***Important Features***

The site comprises a number of habitats including buildings, hardstanding, open fields, trees, hedgerows, areas of grassland and scrub. The hedgerows may be legally protected under the Hedgerows Regulations and it is possible that there may be features within the site or within the locality (e.g. field ponds) which are capable of supporting protected or notable species whose presence would be a material consideration within the planning determination process and require legal obligations to be met. Given its position in the landscape, it is possible that the site may support common, protected and rare species (including UK and Local BAP species) and/or facilitate their movement across the landscape.

As with the Ringwood Road site, an extended phase 1 survey should be carried out to record the types of habitats present on the site and to record the actual or inferred presence of protected or notable species within the site.

##### ***Protected Species***

The site contains habitats that are suitable for a number of protected and notable species. While it is impossible to predict what species could potentially be present without knowing the outcome of the extended phase 1 survey, it is possible that the site may contain breeding birds, reptiles, bats, invertebrates and badger and great crested newts within certain distances. Therefore, it is likely that further surveys will be required to establish presence or likely absence of these groups/species.

The ecological constraints relating to this site are shown in figure 7, later in this report.

#### **4.3.4 Summary and Implication for the Masterplans**

##### ***Dorset Heaths SPA and SAC: legal protection***

Special Protection Areas (SPAs) and Special Areas of Conservation (SACs) are statutory designations and are of European importance (called 'European sites'). Their protection stems from the Birds Directive and Habitats Directive, implemented in the UK under the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2010, which has replaced the 1994

Conservation (Natural habitats &c) Regulations (as amended). The “Habitat Regulations, 2010” make it clear that where development is likely to significantly affect the integrity of a SPA or SAC, development may only be permitted if each of the following three tests can be met:

- there are no suitable alternatives
- there are reasons of overriding public interest, including those of a social or economic nature; and
- that the conservation status of the sites can be maintained.

This means that there may be a requirement for development to deliver ‘avoidance measures’ in order to satisfy the requirements of the Habitats Regulations, 2010.

The Dorset Heaths are designated for their ground nesting birds, which are vulnerable to impacts typically associated with urban encroachment on heaths: recreational pressure, dog walking, cat predation and fires. Because of the potential effects of development on nearby heathlands together with the dependence of some heathland species on habitats outside the designated sites and the rigorous statutory tests of the Habitat Regulations, the Dorset Heaths (amongst other factors) constitute a significant constraint to the outward spread of the conurbations. A series of public inquiry decisions, in which housing development proposals of various scales have been rejected because of its proximity to heathlands, has re-enforced the significance of this issue. In the case of the Dorset Heaths, measures considered suitable to manage potential effects (as set out in the Dorset Heathlands Interim Planning Framework (IPF) include:

- provision for long term financial support to address urban pressures;
- policies and financial support for the provision of alternative green infrastructure, for development up to 5km from the heathland sites;
- policies to direct housing development (including infill) away from key areas adjacent to heathland sites (i.e. within 400m).

***Dorset Heaths SPA and SAC: 400m Development Buffer***

Research which has informed the Dorset Heathlands IPF has shown that certain elements of the heathland ecosystem are vulnerable to the effects that result from urban development in the vicinity; the greater the extent of urbanisation around the periphery of the Dorset Heaths, the greater the likely impact. This has been exacerbated in recent years as a result of the open access afforded to the heathlands under the Countryside and Rights of Way Act (CRoW, 2000).

The 400m heathland buffer relates to the importance for protecting the peripheries of the Dorset Heaths from potential threats, such as recreational pressure where the heaths are the nearest area of green space and few desirable alternatives are available; the lighting of fires; and importantly ground-nesting bird predation associated with the hunting range of domestic cats from residential properties (Use Class C3).

Use class C3 uses should not be promoted within the 400m buffer. If deemed necessary, alternative land uses can be located within the 400m buffer, such as commercial, industrial, open space, SANGS etc.

Like for like replacement of Use class C3 uses within the 400m buffer may be acceptable but will require consultation with Natural England. Where residential development is proposed as near as permitted to the Dorset Heaths (i.e. up to the 400m buffer), careful consideration must be given to the location and quality of SANGS, such that it offers a genuine attractive alternative to the nearby area of the Dorset Heaths. SANGS requirements are discussed further below.

***Dorset Heaths SPA and SAC: SANGS***

Neither of the sites considered above lie within 400m of the Dorset Heaths, but are within the 5km buffer and, therefore, it will need to be demonstrated that adverse impacts to European designated sites can be avoided in accordance with the Habitats Regulations 2010. A Habitats Regulations Assessment (HRA) of the Christchurch & East Dorset Core Strategy was undertaken by Land Use Consultants, which concluded that adverse effects on the integrity of European sites will not occur from 'recreation or urban impacts' provided the proposals included in the Core Strategy regarding the protection of biodiversity and international sites (ME1 and ME2) include the provision of Suitable Alternative Natural Greenspace (SANGs) as part of any of the Christchurch and East Dorset new neighbourhood options, and the requirement for developer contributions towards provision of open space and green infrastructure network (HE9-HE14) are properly implemented.

In terms of mitigation, the principal delivery mechanism recommended by Natural England is the provision of SANGS for residential developments and/or improvements to existing sites to increase their visitor capacity and manage/avoid potential negative effects.

With respect to the accessible natural green space (ANGST) guidance, Natural England advocates that local communities should have access to an appropriate mix of green-spaces providing for a range of recreational needs, of at least 2 hectares of accessible natural green-space per 1,000 population. This can be broken down as follows:

- no person should live more than 300 metres from their nearest area of natural green-space;
- at least one hectare of Local Nature Reserve should be provided per 1,000 population;
- there should be at least one accessible 20 hectare site within 2 kilometres;
- there should be one accessible 100 hectare site within 5 kilometres; and
- there should be one accessible 500 hectare site within 10 kilometres.

However, where sites are particularly susceptible to recreational impact, such as that which may be caused by development in the vicinity of the Dorset Heaths and the Thames Basin Heaths, Natural England guidance stipulates that SANGS provision should aim to provide at least 8 hectares per 1,000 population. Consultation with Natural England has confirmed that up to 16 hectares may actually be required for the Dorset Heaths given their bespoke requirements. However, this is not an adopted policy at this stage, and it is recognised that 16ha per 1,000 population was originally sought by Natural England on the Thames Basin Heaths, before an eventual formal agreement was reached for 8ha per 1,000 population. Therefore at this interim stage it can be concluded that between 8-16ha of SANGS will be needed per 1,000 population.

Natural England has provided guidance towards the characteristics that SANGS should include. Key considerations include:

- ensure provision of adequate car parking and signpost it;
- where large populations are close to a European site, the provision of SANGS should be attractive to visitors on foot;
- sites should be capable of providing routes of 2.5 to 5 kilometres, people may require longer routes;
- where long routes cannot be accommodated within individual SANGS it may be possible to provide them through a network of sites, provided the connecting areas are rural in nature;
- paths do not have to be of any particular width, and both vehicular-sized tracks and narrow Public Rights of Way (PRoW) type paths are acceptable to visitors;
- safety is one of the primary concerns of female visitors. Paths should be routed so that they are perceived as safe by the users, with some routes being through relatively open (visible) terrain (with no trees or scrub, or well spaced mature trees, or wide rides with vegetation back from the path), especially those routes which are 1-3 km long;
- the routing of tracks along hill tops and ridges where there are views is valued by the majority of visitors;
- a substantial number of visitors like to have surfaced but not tarmac paths, particularly where these blend in well with the landscape. This is not necessary for all paths but there should be some more visitor-friendly routes built into the structure of a SANGS, particularly those routes which are 1-3 km long;
- people value the naturalness of sites and artificial infrastructure should be avoided where possible;
- however, SANGS would be expected to have adequate car parking with good information about the site and the routes available. Some subtle waymarking would also be expected for those visitors not acquainted with the layout of the site;
- other infrastructure would not be expected and should generally be restricted to the vicinity of car parking areas where good information and signs of welcome should be the norm, though discretely placed benches or information boards along some routes would be acceptable;
- hills do not put people off visiting a site, particularly where these are associated with good views, but steep hills are not appreciated. An undulating landscape is preferred to a flat one;
- water features, particularly ponds and lakes, act as a focus for visitors for their visit, but are not essential;
- it is imperative that SANGS allows for pet owners to let dogs run freely over a significant part of the walk. Access on SANGS should be largely unrestricted, with both people and their pets being able to freely roam along the majority of routes. This means that sites where freely roaming dogs will cause a nuisance or where they might be in danger (from traffic or such like) should not be considered for SANGS; and
- dog bins should be provided to attract dog walkers.

The guidance also provides comments on the enhancement of existing sites, including ensuring that candidate sites do not have any competing uses that would make them unsuitable as SANGS.

Only with the above measures in place can it be reasonably concluded that there will be no likely net significant effect on the Dorset Heaths sites arising from development within the study areas.

Further advice will be contained in the Core Strategy Habitats Regulations Assessment (HRA) which will include local requirements identified under the Dorset Heaths Interim Planning Framework and Heathlands Development Plan Document (DPD).

#### ***Statutory and Non-Statutory Sites***

It is recommended that no development should take place on any statutory or non-statutory ecological sites. Where possible, development directly adjacent to such sites and fragmentation of existing ecological links between such sites should also be avoided to reduce the potential for indirect effects.

#### ***Important Features***

Important ecological features such as woodland belts, hedgerows, veteran trees, water features and areas of heath and grassland comprise a network of vital green corridors or links. Some of these habitat features will qualify as priority habitats under the UK and local BAPs.

The masterplans should integrate ecological opportunities such as creating new green corridors and enhancing existing green links formed by such features as woodland, hedgerows and water corridors. The requirement for SANGS provision will also directly contribute to green infrastructure, new and enhanced ecological corridors and in demonstrating biodiversity gain.

#### ***Legally Protected Species and Habitats***

Species protected under National and European Legislation are subject to special protection in accordance with the relevant legislation (primarily the Habitat Regulations 2010 and the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended), which generally seeks to safeguard the conservation status of these species and may involve special protection of individual animals or their habitats. All legally protected species are a material consideration in the planning process.

#### ***UK BAP and Local BAP species and Habitats***

BAPs in the UK have no statutory status, but provide a framework for implementing conservation requirements. Furthermore, species and habitats listed as priority species in the UK BAP are afforded a degree of protection under the NERC Act (2006), because the presence of, or potential presence of UK BAP and Dorset BAP habitats and species is a material consideration in the planning process and the Local Authority has a duty to conserve biodiversity and to further the conservation of species and habitats listed under the UK and Local BAP.

#### ***Consideration of species and habitats within the planning process***

Legally protected species and priority habitats and species (e.g. UK BAP and Dorset BAP priority habitats and species) are material planning considerations that will need further consideration. The implications for the masterplans, should protected or BAP species be found present, will depend largely on which species are found and how they are currently using the sites. Further work, including with respect to Phase I Habitat Surveys, protected species surveys and specific habitat surveys (for example botanical surveys or hedgerow surveys) will be required in order to inform more detailed designs. The findings of such surveys would be submitted in support of any future planning applications for land within the study areas. This will ensure that appropriate ecological mitigation informs the scheme designs and is conditioned to any development consent.

## **4.4 Archaeology - Historic Environment**

### **4.4.1 Method**

The approach to archaeological and cultural heritage constraints and opportunities analysis is primarily high level and is based on a desk study of relevant designations and archaeological and cultural heritage information, including the listed buildings information provided by English Heritage, and a review of other available information concerning the study areas.

This approach will minimise planning risk in the future, although it is important to note that the areas are considered to be of moderate, and potentially high, archaeological potential due to the presence of Scheduled Ancient Monuments and unknown resources of significance may yet be discovered. Further, more detailed desk based and survey work will be required in order to inform more detailed designs at later stages and in order to satisfy the requirements of Planning Policy Statement 5 at later planning stages.

Both study areas are known to contain a range of archaeological assets which may influence the consideration of the historic environment as a receptor within the planning determination process.

### **4.4.2 Land off Ringwood Road, Verwood**

#### ***Conservation Areas***

There are no conservation areas in Verwood, though there are a couple of Special Character Areas close to the centre of the settlement. These do not impact on the site.

#### ***Scheduled Ancient Monuments***

There are two Scheduled Ancient Monuments (SAMs) close to the site, both being bowl barrows. Both lie to the north-east of the site area: the first 230m north-east of Ebblake Bridge (EH reference 31907) and the second 90m south-west of Reservoir Cottage (EH reference 31906). Both SAMs are located within the immediate fringe of Ringwood Forest which lies against the northern boundary of Verwood itself, and the existence of this forest may mask additional remains. These SAMs are shown on the archaeology and cultural heritage constraints plan.

#### ***Listed Buildings***

There are no listed buildings in the vicinity of the site.

#### ***Historic Parks and Gardens***

There are no Historic Parks in close proximity to the site.

Contractors are not to scale dimensions from this drawing



Legend

- SSSI
- SPA/ Ramsar
- SNCI
- Scheduled Ancient Monuments

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**Client** East Dorset District Council

**Project** Stage 1 Baseline Report - Additional Sites

**Description** Fig 6 - Land Off Ringwood Road Archeological & Ecological Constraints

**Status**

**Scale** NTS

**Job number** 27020

**Drawn**

**Drawing number**

**Date** Nov 2011

**Revision**

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Figure 6 Archaeological and ecological constraints around the Ringwood Road site

### **Archaeological and Cultural Heritage Assets**

A summary of known archaeological and cultural heritage assets is shown below:

	<b>Statutory Designations</b>	<b>Buried Features</b>	<b>Spot Finds</b>	<b>Surface Features</b>
Palaeolithic				
Mesolithic				
Neolithic				
Bronze Age	✓	✓		
Iron Age				
Roman				
Post-Roman				
Saxon				
Medieval				
Post-Medieval		✓		✓
Modern				✓

The baseline evidence indicates a relatively coherent prehistoric landscape, largely biased towards the north and north east of this site. While there is evidence associated with the Post Medieval ceramic industry, this is less evident than might have been expected given the proximity of the centre of Verwood.

#### **4.4.3 Bluebird Social Club and adjacent land, Longham**

##### **Conservation Areas**

There are no conservation areas in the immediate vicinity of the site. The nearest conservation area is Hampreston, which lies to the south of Hampreston Road and to the west of the site.

##### **Scheduled Ancient Monuments**

There are four Scheduled Ancient Monuments located within the study area; all are located to the north-east of the site roughly proscribing an arc 600m away. The Scheduled Ancient Monuments are all bell or bowl barrows located at the urban fringe of Dudsbury.

The SAMs in the closest proximity to the site are shown on the archaeology and cultural heritage constraints plan.

##### **Listed Buildings**

There are a number of listed buildings within Longham. These are shown on the cultural heritage constraints plan.

##### **Historic Parks and Gardens**

No Historic Parks and Gardens have been identified in close proximity to the site.

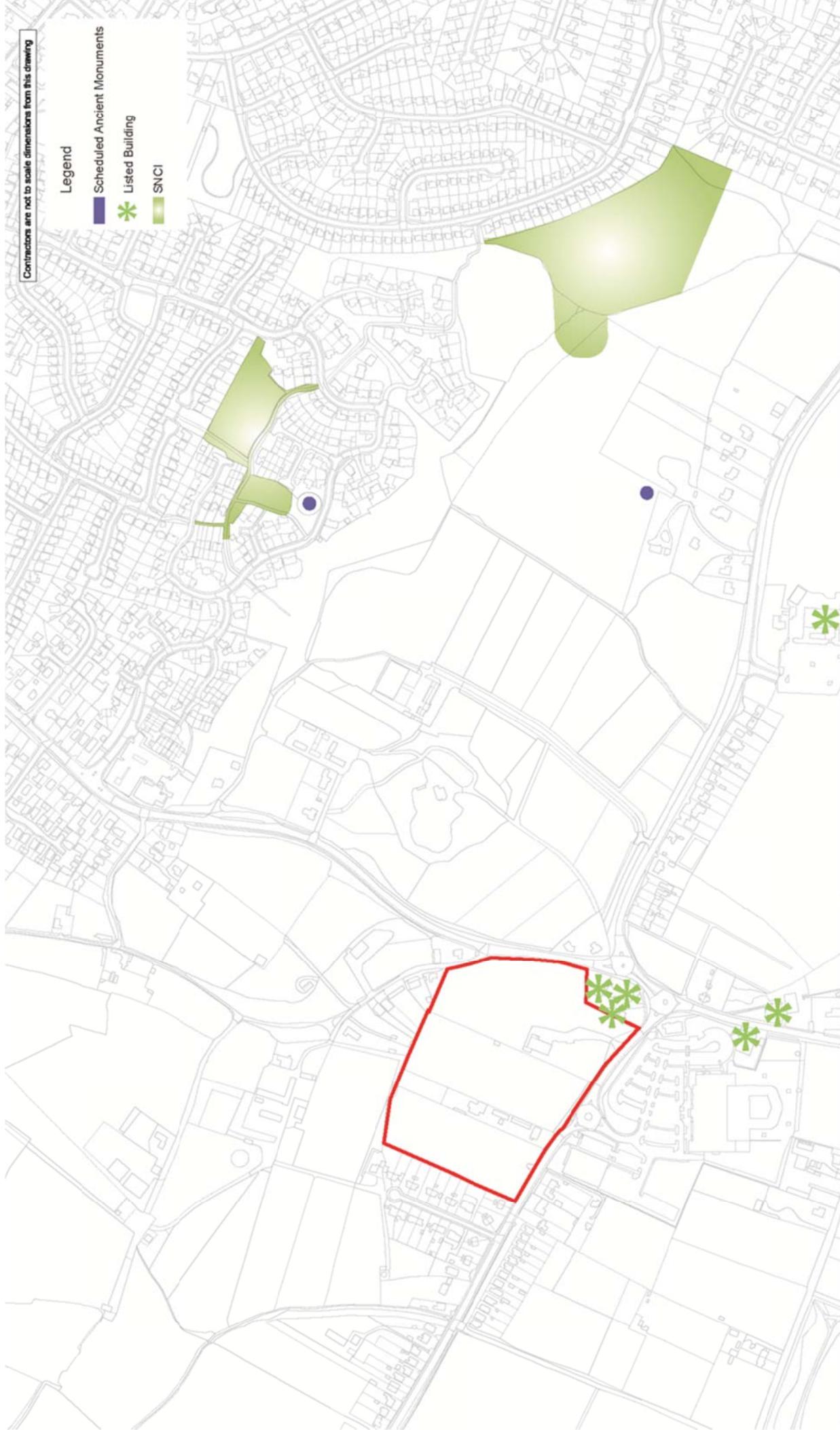
Contractors are not to scale dimensions from this drawing

Legend

Scheduled Ancient Monuments

Listed Building

SNCI



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Client East Dorset District Council

Project Stage 1 Baseline Report - Additional Sites

Description Fig 7- Bluebird Social Club Archeological & Ecological Constraints

Status

Scale NTS

Job number 27020

Drawn

Drawing number

Date Nov 2011

Revision

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**Archaeological and Cultural Heritage Assets**

A summary of known archaeological and cultural heritage assets within the study area is shown below.

	<b>Statutory Designations</b>	<b>Buried Features</b>	<b>Spot Finds</b>	<b>Surface Features</b>
Palaeolithic			✓	
Mesolithic			✓	
Neolithic				
Bronze Age	✓			
Iron Age			✓	
Roman				
Post-Roman				
Saxon				
Medieval		✓		
Post-Medieval	✓			✓
Modern				✓

The immediate vicinity around the site contains a range of archaeological assets, including a range of prehistoric assets dated mainly from the Bronze Age and Iron Age (though earlier remains are known).

**4.4.4 Summary and Implication for the Masterplans**

The study areas contain examples of Scheduled Ancient Monuments and listed buildings. However, these have little bearing on the development of the sites.

In general, the main area of archaeological interest within the area is prehistoric activity which is known at a moderate density including earthwork remains (mainly ritual sites but also indicators of settlement) and also spot finds.

There would appear to be a propensity for archaeological remains to follow favourable geology (as providing raw materials for stone working etc) and also the route of watercourses (such as the River Stour) which have been shown to attract both seasonal and permanent human activity potentially for the benefit of ready access to a food source and also transport.

The activity in the historic periods is evidenced by both standing structures across both areas (including listed buildings from the Post Medieval period) and also ancillary remains potentially indicating agricultural activity across the area. With respect to the Verwood site especially, the presence of various scale potteries dating to the Post Medieval period is a key element of the historic expansion of the area.

The findings set out in this document should be viewed as preliminary and have aimed to guide development to the most suitable locations with respect to archaeology and cultural heritage. This approach will minimise planning risk in the future (particularly with respect to statutorily protected features), although it is important to note that the area is high in archaeological potential and unknown resources of significance may yet be discovered. Further work, including with respect to a full desk based assessment, intrusive investigation, geophysical survey etc. will be required in order to inform more detailed designs where hitherto unknown archaeological resources may be required to be preserved in situ, thereby potentially directly affecting the layout of future development.

#### 4.5 Flood Risk

##### 4.5.1 Land off Ringwood Road, Verwood

The Environment Agency flood maps and the Bournemouth, Christchurch, East Dorset, North Dorset and Salisbury Level 1 SFRA indicates that the site is located in Fluvial Flood Zone 1 – areas of low risk.



Figure 8 Ringwood Road - associated flood risk



Figure 9 Extract of ED SFRA

The risk of flooding from surface, ground, tidal and artificial sources have been assessed through an initial desk study. The flood risk from these sources are considered to be low risk, however, site specific flood risk assessments should be undertaken to fully assess the risks and accompany any future planning application. The risk of flooding from surface water is considered to be low as the site is in the upstream areas of the catchment. Therefore, there are small areas for surface water runoff generation once the soil and sewer capacity is exceeded, this small risk can be managed through the incorporation of preferential flow paths through the development. At this stage the risk of flooding from groundwater is considered to be low risk. As the sites are located in Flood Zone 1 all types of Planning Policy Statement 25 (PPS25) development types are suitable.

Where the surface water runoff from the proposed development is to be infiltrated to groundwater there is a risk of groundwater contamination. To minimise the risk, a review of the Environment Agency's Groundwater Protection Maps has been undertaken. These show which areas of groundwater are more sensitive to pollution. These maps indicate that the site is not located within a protection zone; in this instance there are fewer restrictions on the quality of any water that is returning into the natural cycle.

A desktop soil assessment has concluded that the site is on naturally wet soils (unsuitable for infiltration). It is assumed that the site will discharge by attenuated outfalls, attenuated back to the Greenfield surface water runoff rate prior to discharge into existing watercourses / networks.

A desk based assessment of the soil types indicates that the site is located on wet soils, outside of a groundwater catchment. It is, therefore, considered unlikely that soakaways can be utilised, with the surface water runoff discharged to a surface water sewer at Greenfield runoff rates. However, the infiltration rates and thus the attenuation storage required can only be calculated following site specific ground investigation. The surface water management strategy will need to incorporate an allowance for climate change in accordance with PPS25, this is currently a 30% increase in rainfall for residential development

A quick storage calculation has been undertaken to estimate that 1,580 m<sup>3</sup> of surface water attenuation may be required. The following assumptions were used:

1. Attenuation to the greenfield runoff rates is required (worse case scenario)
2. 80% of the site will be developed (2.6 ha)
3. The percentage impermeable (PIMP) for all future development is 60%.
4. 1 in 100 year Greenfield runoff rate of 20.09 l/s/ha:

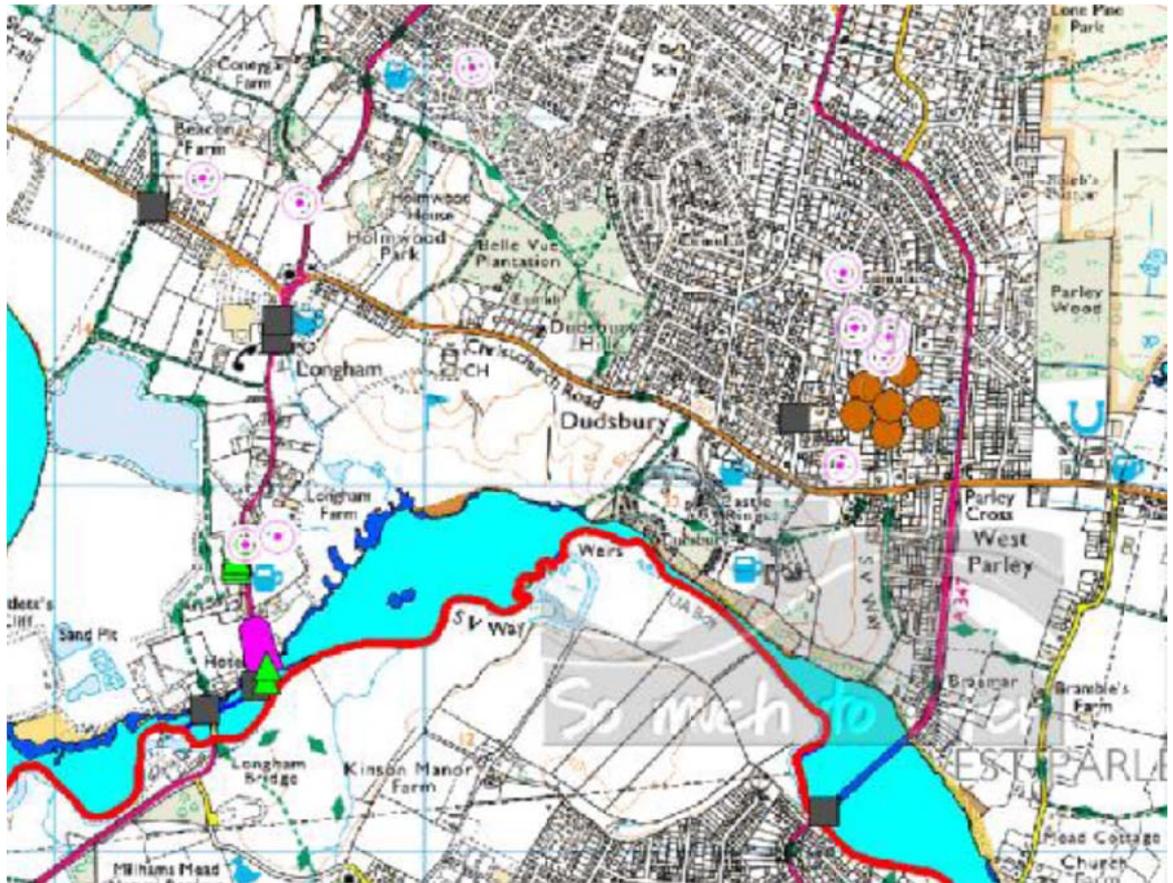
#### 4.5.2 Bluebird Social Club and adjacent land, Longham

This section outlines the flood risk to the potential development area within Longham. The potential development is likely to change the surface water runoff patterns which would require attenuation storage to reduce the post development runoff to the existing rates thus preventing an increase in flood risk elsewhere, therefore, the potential attenuation storage volumes are outlined later in this section.



**Figure 10 Bluebird Social Club site and adjacent land - associated flood risk**

The Environment Agency's online flood maps and the Bournemouth, Christchurch, East Dorset, North Dorset and Salisbury (ED) Level 1 SFRA indicate that the site is located within Fluvial Flood Zone 1 (areas of low risk, an annual flooding probability of 1 in 1,000 years or less). In addition to fluvial flooding there is a risk of surface water flooding. This is because the development areas are potentially located in or close to the preferential flow paths that could operate once the capacities of the soils or sewers are exceeded. Further analysis will be required to determine the risks. However, these risks can be reduced through the incorporation and design of surface water flow paths.



**Figure 11 Extract of the ED SFRA-**

Where the surface water runoff from the proposed development is to be infiltrated to groundwater there is a risk of groundwater contamination. As before, a review of the Environment Agency's Groundwater protection maps has been undertaken and these show which areas of groundwater are more sensitive to pollution. These maps indicate that these sites are not located within a protection zone; in this instance there are less restrictions on the quality of any water that is returning into the natural cycle.

A desktop soil assessment has concluded that the site could be on either freely draining (suitable for infiltration) or naturally wet soils (unsuitable for infiltration). It is assumed that if the site is freely draining it will discharge by a combination of infiltration / attenuated outfalls, otherwise it will be attenuated back to the Greenfield surface water runoff rate prior to discharge into existing watercourses / networks.

A quick storage calculation has been undertaken to estimate that 750 m<sup>3</sup> of surface water attenuation may be required. The following assumptions were used:

1. Attenuation to the greenfield runoff rates is required (worse case scenario)
2. 80% of the site will be developed (1.3 ha)
3. The percentage impermeable (PIMP) for all future development is 60%.
4. 1 in 100 year Greenfield runoff rate of 20.09 l/s/ha:

## **4.6 Infrastructure**

### **4.6.1 Introduction**

Initial data searches and liaison with the infrastructure providers has been undertaken to establish the presence of primary utilities infrastructure within the potential developable area for each new neighbourhood area.

The location and size of primary infrastructure has been identified where it affects the area of search and initial confirmation of availability of infrastructure to service the prospective development demands has been obtained where necessary.

The de-regulation of the utilities market provides greater flexibility than before in planning for development as the potential infrastructure investment costs must be weighed against the potential supply income for a utility.

### **4.6.2 Land off of Ringwood Road, Verwood**

#### ***Gas***

Scotia Gas Networks Group are the gas transporter for the majority of the area and have provided infrastructure plans. Although they do not currently cover the development site, it is anticipated that there will be no infrastructure present within the site.

There is a comprehensive local gas supply network around Verwood which it is anticipated will be able to provide supply to the anticipated new neighbourhood area. It is possible that some localised diversion of low pressure mains may be required to facilitate access to the site, but the scope of such works would be unlikely to generate an abnormal development cost.

#### ***Electricity***

We have previously been provided with local infrastructure plans for south and west Verwood, but they do not currently extend across the site. Mapping and aerial photographs do not show the presence of any significant infrastructure within the site boundaries. It is possible that some localised diversion of other low voltage cables may be required to facilitate access to the site, but the scope of such works would be unlikely to generate an abnormal development cost. A network of sub-stations could be required for development to boost supplies as required, although the land take implications (around 3mx3m each) is not normally significant.

#### ***Water***

We do not currently have water infrastructure plans for this site. However, it is not anticipated that there will be any infrastructure within the site. There are water supply networks around the site and it is anticipated that potable water supply will be available. Some reinforcement of offsite mains may be necessary and would be undertaken phased with delivery of development.

#### ***Telephone***

Strategic networks may include fibre optic supplies and these are normally located in public highway and so would only be affected by development masterplans where significant highway works are proposed. Any existing overhead supplies associated with the local telecoms networks present in the area of search can be diverted within the supply infrastructure required for the masterplan.

### ***Mobile***

Ofcom records indicate that there is one mobile communications base station within the area, but this is located off site and it is not expected to form a significant constraint to development.

### ***Foul Drainage***

We do not currently have foul drainage infrastructure plans although it is not anticipated that there will be any infrastructure within the site. Based on our previous discussions with Wessex Water regarding the existing foul network in the area of Verwood, it may not have the capacity to accommodate additional foul flows generated by the development and may, therefore, need improvements. It is, therefore, considered likely that offsite improvements will be required to service the site, subject to further investigation by Wessex Water.

## **4.6.3 Bluebird Social Club and adjacent land, Longham**

### ***Gas***

Scotia Gas Networks Group is the gas transporter for the majority of the area and has provided infrastructure plans for the area, although they do not currently cover the development site.

There is a comprehensive local gas supply network around Longham, which it is anticipated will be able to provide supply to the anticipated new neighbourhood area. It is possible that some localised diversion of low pressure mains may be required to facilitate access to the site, but the scope of such works would be unlikely to generate an abnormal development cost.

### ***Electricity***

There are 11 kV and low voltage electricity supply cables within the site. The 11Kv cable runs diagonally across the site from the north west to the south east, whilst the low voltage goes to the existing club house. It is possible that some localised diversion of other low voltage cables may be required to facilitate access to the site, but the scope of such works would be unlikely to generate an abnormal development cost. A network of sub-stations could be required for development to boost supplies as required, although the land take implications (around 3mx3m each) is not normally significant.

### ***Water***

There are water supply networks around the areas and it is anticipated that potable water supply will be available. Some reinforcement of off site mains may be necessary and would be undertaken phased with delivery of development.

### ***Telephone***

Strategic networks may include fibre optic supplies and these are normally located in public highway and so would only be affected by development masterplans where significant highway works are proposed. Any existing overhead supplies associated with the local telecoms networks present in the area of search can be diverted within the supply infrastructure required for the masterplan.

### ***Mobile***

Ofcom records indicate that there is one mobile communications base station within the area, but this is located off site and it is not expected to form a significant constraint to development.

***Foul Drainage***

A private sewer is located to the north and east of the site, it is likely that this is within the adjacent road rather than the site but further confirmation would be required. This flows into a private pumping station to the east of the site, it is likely that reinforcement and other works could be required to support the development.

## 5 Transport and access

### 5.1 Land off Ringwood Road

General context regarding the location of Verwood and key town characteristics was provided in the previous Stage 1 Report and we do not seek to repeat this here. This section focuses on the specific sites in terms of access and accessibility.

#### 5.1.1 Vehicular access:

- The only opportunity for vehicular access to this site appears to be via the western arm of Parkland Close.
- The previous developer appears, within the layout of the roads, to have left the physical opportunity for vehicular access to future development in this location.
- Parkland Close adjoins the B3081 at an existing priority junction towards its eastern end. The current junction appears to be located to maximise visibility in both directions.
- Parkland Close runs parallel to the B3081, but the roads are separated by a tree-lined grass verge (see later for discussion of pedestrian access).
- It would be most appropriate to improve the existing Parkland Close/ B3081 junction in its current location.
- The B3081 links to Black Moor Road (access to the Ebblake Industrial Estate) just to the south east of the site.
- Subject to ownership of this verge, it would appear that there would be opportunities to improve this priority access junction (in its current location) should this prove necessary at the time of transport modelling as part of any transport assessment for the site.

#### 5.1.2 Public transport access:

Public transport services to/from Verwood are currently of a low frequency and, therefore, unlikely to enable significant or notable mode shift from car use, to increase the existing low levels of public transport use.

There are two regular weekday services (one to Poole and the other to Bournemouth), each of which runs hourly. Furthermore, a lack of evening services and a very low frequency of Sunday services further reduce opportunities to promote increased levels of public transport use.

Some journeys could be expected to be made by public transport. However, the attractiveness of non-car options might be further diminished by Verwood's distance from main travel to work destinations, the variety of travel to work destinations (e.g. no bus services into Hampshire) and the town's distance from the rail network.

Not only are public transport frequencies lower than for other potential new neighbourhood settlements in East Dorset (albeit some sites in Verwood may still fare better than some sites in the other settlements), the travel to work distances are likely to make public transport usage less favourable in terms of travel time than by car, particularly for the longer journeys necessary to reach some of the key travel to work destinations from Verwood (e.g. longer routes with more stops are more liable to have longer journey times relative to car than shorter commutes).

The relevant distance of the proposed development site from the main bus routes through Verwood would also make the prospects for accessibility to this site by bus lower, particularly when compared to e.g. the Eastworth Road site to the west of Verwood. The site is located close to bus stops on the B3081, to the east of Parkland Close. These are positioned between Parkland Close and Black Moor Road (access to Ebblake Industrial Estate). They are approximately 250m from the potential site access junction. The 303 bus service to Ringwood used to use these stops, but it is understood that this service has now been withdrawn. The only services now stopping at them is the 97 route to/from Ringwood on a Wednesday and the 302 route to/from Ringwood on a Saturday (on Tuesdays the 302 service does not use these stops).

As a result, proximity to these stops does not provide access to the most frequent bus services to/from Verwood, namely the 36 and the 37 services. These provide connections to the settlements of Ringwood, Ferndown, Bournemouth and Poole.

The closest stops on the 36/37 routes are at the northern end of Woodlinken Drive, west of the site. These are located approximately 700m to 1km from the potential site access, depending upon whether a more direct pedestrian link is provided from Parkland Close to the B3081 than currently exists. It would take residents approximately 10 to 15 minutes to walk to these stops. Given that these routes only operate hourly, this is considered likely to be of sufficient distance and inconvenience to deter residents from making use of these services. Some of the lower frequency routes also travel via Woodlinken Drive and not via the B3081 adjacent to the site. A number only stop to the south of Verwood and do not travel through the eastern part of the town at all.

Unfortunately, there are currently no pedestrian linkages to the bus stops. Indeed there is no pedestrian link from footways on Parkland Close to the footway along the B3081 (on its southern side). The eastbound bus stop on the B3081 is a simple pole and flag arrangement in the grass verge, with no footway linking to it. Unless useful services are to call at this stop, now or in the future, there would be limited benefit in improving linkages to this stop specifically. A new footpath along the north of the B3081 could, however, improve accessibility to the nearby Ringwood Forest for recreational purposes. To achieve this, it would be necessary to provide a new footway out of Parkland Close (at its eastern end) and a new footway along the northern side of the B3081 (past the bus stop to the Forest entrance).

More importantly, however, would be to improve accessibility to the footways to the south of the B3081 and thereby to the Ebblake Industrial Estate (to the east), to the town and to bus stops on Woodlinken Drive (to the west). A new pedestrian link from the south western end of Parkland Close, plus the provision of footways and a suitable controlled or uncontrolled crossing point would be necessary to connect to the footway on the southern side of the B3081.

It is considered unlikely that amendment of the local bus routes to serve the north east Verwood site would be viable for the limited number of houses in this location. Services to/from this site would only be likely if this was allied with amendments for other purposes (e.g. to better serve the Ebblake Industrial Estate). There are no known plans for such an amendment at present.

Views have been sought from Dorset County Council's public transport officer, but no comments have yet been received at the time of writing this report. Overall, however, it is

considered that existing public transport accessibility to the site is poor and the realistic prospect for improvements appears at best marginal.

As noted previously, Dorset County Council has also raised concern about the burden and sustainability of providing for additional education trips as a result of any increase in resident pupils above primary age in Verwood. As there is no secondary school within 3 miles of Verwood, it is understood that the majority of existing secondary age pupils (who are eligible for and take advantage of these services) are transported by coach to/from the Queen Elizabeth School in Wimborne Minster.

### 5.1.3 Non-motorised access:

Pedestrian access to local bus stops was discussed previously. The table below shows the closest day-to-day facilities to the site and the distance to these on foot. It highlights that most types of day to day facility will be beyond walking distance. Unfortunately, the majority of existing facilities in Verwood are located to its western side, including the town centre. The proposed development site at Ringwood Road is, therefore, remote from most facilities, meaning that trips on foot could be severely limited. The main locations which could be reached on foot would be the Ebblake Industrial Estate and potentially Ringwood Forest.

In summary, the site only provides accessibility on foot (in terms of distance alone) to employment opportunities and services at the Ebblake Industrial Estate and also to Ringwood Forest. The access to the forest is approximately 500m from the potential site access, with the entrance on Ringwood Road, east of the site.

**Table 1: Summary of distances to various day-to-day facilities – Ringwood Road Site**

Amenity	Name or location of facility	Approximate distance from potential site access	Desired and Preferred Maximum Walking distances
<b>Infant School</b>	Hillside Preschool & Early Learn	2.4km	600m desirable, 1km preferred maximum
<b>Primary School</b>	Hillside Community First School	2.4km	600m desirable, 1km preferred maximum
<b>Secondary School</b>	Ferndown Upper School	11.5km	1.2km desirable, 2km preferred maximum
<b>Bus Stops</b>	Ebblake Bridge	250m	400m maximum desirable for daytime services.
	Woodlinken Drive	700m – 1km	700m maximum desirable for services between 7pm and 7am.
<b>Dentist</b>	The Dental Practice	2.1km	1km to 1.2km preferred maximum
<b>General Practice</b>	The Verwood Practice	2.9km	1km to 1.2km preferred maximum
<b>Pharmacy</b>	Lloyds Pharmacy	2.9km	1km to 1.2km preferred maximum

<b>Leisure</b>	Apollo Leisure Centre	300m	1.2km desired maximum
<b>Employment</b>	Ebblake Industrial Estate	350m	2km preferred maximum
<b>Supermarket/ general store</b>	Morrisons/ general store	3km/ 1.2km	800m desirable, 1.2 preferred maximum
<b>Town/ Village Centre</b>	'Ferret Green'	2.5km	600m desirable, 1.2 preferred maximum

*Note: Distances are measured from the potential site access and therefore actual distance to dwellings within the site would be higher. Distance is measured along the existing road network/ rights of way.*

More positively, many facilities will be within cycling distance. The whole of Verwood falls within 8km of the proposed development, which is identified as being a comfortable cycling distance for a reasonably fit person.

Verwood is relatively flat, making cycling more attractive than in areas where gradients may act as a deterrent. However, existing levels of cycling are believed to be below the national average. (2001 Census suggests that cycling represents around 2% travel to work journeys).

There are some qualitative issues with the current level of provision for cyclists. The B3081 is suggested by Dorset County Council's cycle map as being a suggested cycle route. Routes are suggested west to the town centre (Ferrett Green), which is also located on the B3081. There are also routes towards the western part of Verwood via Woodlinken Drive and Lake Road. There are, however, no formal facilities for cyclists in this part of the town at present and cyclists would, therefore, need to travel on the carriageway. Consequently, some new residents could be deterred from cycling to/from the site, particularly those travelling with children or with lower confidence in cycling.

A number of improvements are planned to cycle routes to the east and south of Verwood (e.g. upgrading of bridleways to make them more suitable and comfortable for cycling). It is planned that these will link to a future off-road cycle route through Ringwood Forest to Ringwood, south of the B3081.

## 5.2 Bluebird site and adjacent land, Longham

Some general transport context regarding the Ferndown and West Parley area was contained within the Stage 1 report. Again, we have not sought to repeat this here.

### 5.2.1 Vehicular access:

The promoters of the site have suggested two vehicular access points to the site as follows:

1. Use of the existing access to the social club from Ham Lane;
2. Amendment to the existing mini roundabout to the south west of the site on Ham Lane, to provide a fourth arm into the new development.

Ham Lane currently operates with a 40 mph speed limit from a point just west of its junction with the Longham roundabouts.

Both of these access proposals appear generally reasonable, however, intensification of use of the existing access to the Bluebird Social Club, given its proximity to the Longham double mini roundabout (which currently faces capacity constraints in its operation), is not considered to be favourable.

At the proposed level of development, it would be preferable for vehicular traffic to solely access and exit the site from a fourth arm to an extended mini roundabout. This is likely to require land within the masterplan area, just north of the existing junction, to allow its reconfiguration to accommodate the fourth arm into the new development.

Any Transport Assessment would need to demonstrate that there is no significant detrimental worsening of the operation of the Longham roundabouts. The development proposals will also need to demonstrate the satisfactory working of the revised access roundabout, in addition to any other nearby junctions identified by Dorset County Council.

Consideration should be given to maintenance of the existing social club access for non-vehicular traffic and to enable secondary emergency access to the site.

### 5.2.2 Public transport access:

The table below provides a summary of bus services to/from Longham.

The only service is the number 37 route which runs north/south along Ringwood Road and connects the site to Ferndown town centre, Tricketts Cross Sainsburys, Verwood and Poole.

The service is operated by Wilts and Dorset and runs hourly. The closest northbound bus stop is located north east of the site, just south of its junction with Pompey's Lane. The closest southbound bus stop is located south of the Longham double mini roundabouts just north of the White Hart Inn on Ringwood Road (opposite the Inn). The Pompeys Lane stop is approximately 250m from the existing Bluebird Social Club site entrance. The stop consists of a small layby and a flag and pole arrangement. The White Hart stop is located approximately 150m from the Bluebird Social Club entrance and benefits from a shelter with seats and a litter bin.

**Table 2: Summary of regular bus services to/from Longham – White Hart Inn**

Route		Time	Monday to Friday	Saturday	Sunday	Closest Stop to East Verwood Site / distance
37 [Wilts & Dorset]	Poole - Longham - Ferndown - Verwood	Daytime	Hourly buses to Poole from 0753 until 1928		No Service	Pompeys Lane 250m White Hart Inn (Ringwood Road) / 150m
		Evening	No Service			

A good quality footway is available to the northbound bus stop at Pomeys Lane from the existing social club access. This is of good width and it is not necessary to cross any roads external to the site in order to reach this stop. At least one new footway link (pedestrian access) should be provided from the east of the site onto the footway for the site, to

improve pedestrian accessibility to the 37 bus service northbound and towards facilities in Ferndown (e.g. schools).

There are also good footways south of the Longham mini roundabouts towards the White Hart Inn. There is currently a lack of crossing provision towards the south and any proposed development should make provisions to improve this situation, particularly across Ham Lane. Suitable provisions might include extension of the 30mph speed limit and the provision of controlled or uncontrolled crossing facilities. It is likely to be possible for people to walk through the Haskins site to reach the southbound bus stops/ from the northbound bus stop by the White Hart (when returning from the Poole direction).

There is a signal controlled crossing south of the White Hart Inn, linking to the post office. This is not on the desire line for access to the southbound bus stop, however, and provisions would also be required to improve pedestrian access to the southbound bus stop opposite the White Hart.

There is no railway station near to Longham. The closest station accessible by non-car means of travel is the railway station at Poole. Rail is, therefore, not expected to comprise a part of many journeys.

Overall, public transport provision can be considered to be poor, given the relatively low frequency of the number 37 route (hourly) and the lack of evening or Sunday services. Another limitation is that relatively few destinations can be reached using these services. They do, however, provide a welcome link to facilities in Ferndown (e.g. secondary and primary schools) and to Poole.

There is a lack of east-west services from the Longham area towards employment opportunities in the vicinity of Bournemouth International Airport. This applies to both public transport and cycle routes.

There are no planned public transport improvements known at this time.

Previous discussions with Dorset County Council's former public transport officer suggested that there would be a reliance on the number 37 route for services to/from the site. There is already a service to/from this site, making it favourable in public transport accessibility terms than some alternative sites. However, as noted above, it is acknowledged that the service is low frequency (hourly).

Views have been sought from the Council's current public transport officer, but no comments have yet been received. Overall, the level of public transport accessibility is considered low to moderate.

### **5.2.3 Non-motorised access:**

Footway provision north from Longham towards Ferndown is good. There is a continuous footway along the western side of Ringwood Road to Ferndown town centre. There are also good crossing facilities to links eastward into the southern areas of Ferndown (e.g. Castlebridge Road, Glenmoor Road). The Parley First School is located on Glenmoor Road. The Ferndown First, Middle and Upper Schools are located west of the town centre, west of Church Road.

In terms of available provisions, a safe and convenient walking route would, therefore, be available to these facilities, although the distances may discourage walking.

As noted above, improvements would be needed in pedestrian links to the White Hart Inn, the post office and more specifically the southbound bus stop from the proposed development site.

Facilities in Ferndown are also on the local cycle network and good off-road facilities exist from Glenmoor Road northwards. The footway along the west of the Ringwood Road is identified as a footway link that cyclists could walk their bicycle along. It is anticipated that any development at the Bluebird Social Club site might necessitate a contribution towards improvement of this facility to cover cyclists (e.g. better linkage to the existing cycle network).

The route from the site to Ferndown town centre is of relatively low gradient and topography is considered unlikely to deter trips by bicycle.

The accessibility of this potential development site to various (existing) day to day facilities by different modes of transport has been considered (see the table below). In terms of distance to facilities, it can be seen that:

- **Bus stops:** As discussed above, the site is well located for access to bus stops on the 37 bus route, although qualitative issues related to the frequency, destinations and hours of operation of the services are noted.
- **Town centre:** The town centre of Ferndown provides a range of day to day services and facilities, but falls beyond a reasonable desirable maximum walking distance of the site. It is, however, within reasonable cycling distance of the town centre and with improved connections along the west of Ringwood Road could be considered to be easily accessible by bicycle in future. It is also accessible from the site by bus.
- **Primary school:** The closest primary school to the site is the Parley First School in Glenmoor road. This is also well beyond a reasonable walking distance of the site, but is within cycling distance, so may be accessible by bicycle in the future, subject to improved facilities along Ringwood Road.
- **Pre-school:** The closest pre-school to the site is located within Longham Village itself, a comfortable walking distance from the site.
- **Secondary school:** The Ferndown Lower, Middle and Upper schools are all located west of Ferndown town centre, off of Church Road. These are all beyond a reasonable walking distance of the Bluebird Social club. They do, however, fall within a reasonable cycling distance, subject to improved connectivity to the existing cycle network route further north.
- **Healthcare:** Healthcare facilities are also beyond reasonable walking distance from the site, but fall within cycling distance.

**Table 3: Summary of distances to various day-to-day facilities – Bluebird Social Club Site**

Amenity	Name or location of facility	Approximate Distance from Potential Site Access	Desired and Preferred Maximum Walking distances
Infant School	Longham Community Pre School	250m	600m desirable, 1km preferred maximum
Primary School	Parley First School	1.9km	600m desirable, 1km preferred maximum

<b>Secondary School</b>	Ferndown Upper School	3.2km	1.2km desirable, 2km preferred maximum
<b>Bus Stop</b>	White Hart Inn (Ringwood Road) Pompeys Lane	150m 250m	400m desirable
<b>Leisure</b>	Dudsbury Golf Club	500m	1.2km desirable maximum
<b>Employment</b>	Longham Business Centre	600m	2km preferred maximum
<b>Dentist</b>	Penny Hill Practice	2.2km	1km to 1.2km preferred maximum
<b>General Practice</b>	Ferndown Medical Centre	2.2km	1km to 1.2km preferred maximum
<b>Pharmacy</b>	Parley Cross Pharmacy	2.2km	1km to 1.2km preferred maximum
<b>Supermarket/ general store</b>	Lidl/ general store	1km/ 100m	800m desirable, 1.2 preferred maximum
<b>Town Centre</b>	Ferndown	2.5km	600m desirable, 1.2 preferred maximum

*Note: Distances are measured from the potential site access and therefore actual distance to dwellings within the site would be higher. Distance is measured along the existing road network/ rights of way.*

## 6 Conclusion

This report has provided a high level assessment of both sites. In summary, both sites have:

- No identified ecological designations within the site
- No identified archaeological designations within the site
- No flooding issues
- No abnormal infrastructure costs

However, neither site is considered to fair well from an accessibility point of view. Ringwood Road is close to an industrial area and Ringwood Forest, but distant from the town centre. Also, Verwood is distant from a number of employment destinations. The site at Longham is in reasonable proximity to some of the town's facilities, but still poorly located in relation to a number of other key destinations.

However, a key issue which is, in our view, a critical factor for the Bluebird Social Club and adjacent land site, is the Green Belt gap between Longham and Ferndown. For the reasons set out in the landscape section, we consider that this would contribute to an unacceptable loss of the gap and help towards the creation of coalescence between the two settlements. Whilst the western extremities of the site could be considered for development, this comprises a very small site that would only add to the pressure to the existing services and facilities without offering any further benefit. We consider that this site should be discounted from further consideration.