

6. General Policies

- 6.1. This Chapter contains general policies which will apply either to the whole Plan area or to extensive parts of it, and which will be used by the Local Planning Authority, in conjunction with the policies in the Structure Plan, as the basis for development control decisions. They will also give guidance to intending developers.

The policies must be taken as a whole. Development which may be acceptable in terms of one policy may be unacceptable in terms of another dealing with other aspects or wholly different issues. For example, a proposal by an intending developer may need to be considered in the light of:

- policies relating to that particular type of development, such as housing;
- other policies reflecting particular features of importance in the area in which it is proposed, such as areas of nature conservation importance; and
- policies on such matters as design, landscaping and highways.

- 6.2. Development proposals and policies applying specifically to local areas such as individual towns or villages are contained in other sections of the Plan. These will also need to be taken into account. Where a specific development proposal is made in the Plan, it will take precedence over the general policies, should these conflict in ways which cannot be overcome by the design or manner in which the development is to be carried out.

- 6.3. Within this Chapter, the policies are arranged in four sections:

Section 1: policies which reflect the character of the area itself, such as its natural history value, or whether it is an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty or a Conservation Area;

Section 2: policies that will apply to particular types of development which may be proposed, such as housing, or flats, or commercial development;

Section 3: design policies which will apply to the way all developments are sited, designed and carried out;

Section 4: policies on transport matters.

Section 1 Policies Reflecting the Character of the Area

Areas of Nature Conservation Importance

- 6.4. East Dorset is particularly rich in sites of nature conservation importance. Some of these, which are of the highest importance, such as the lowland heathlands, are protected under international agreements such as the Ramsar and Bern Conventions on Wetlands or are protected under European legislation as candidate Special Areas of Conservation (SACs) or designated Special Protection Areas (SPAs). These areas will form part of the "Natura 2000" network of European sites.
- 6.5. These major sites and others which are of national importance are also protected through their designation by English Nature as Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSIs) under British legislation. These include some rivers as well as areas of land: the River Crane/Moors River and River Avon in particular are of outstanding importance. Holt Heath and Holt Forest are National Nature Reserves. There are many other sites of local importance (Sites of Nature Conservation Interest (SNCIs)) which are protected by local planning policies. These are shown on the Proposals Map.
- 6.6. Bournemouth, Dorset and Poole Structure Plan Environment Policies A to D are key in the consideration of development proposals and the protection of features of natural environmental importance. These are as follows:

Environment Policy A

Proposals for development which may adversely affect the integrity of a candidate or designated Special Area of Conservation, "potential" or classified Special Protection Area, or Ramsar site, will be allowed only if there is no alternative solution and if there are imperative reasons of overriding public interest. In addition proposals for development which may adversely affect a priority natural habitat or species will be allowed only if they are necessary for reasons of human health or public safety, or other imperative reasons of overriding public interest.

Environment Policy B

Proposals for development which may adversely affect Sites of Special Scientific Interest or National Nature reserves will be allowed only if it is evident that the benefits arising from the development or land-use clearly outweigh the intrinsic nature conservation or scientific interest of the site itself.

Environment Policy C

Proposals for development which may adversely affect Sites of Nature Conservation Interest or Regionally Important Geological and Geomorphological Sites will be allowed only if it is evident that the benefits arising from the development clearly outweigh the intrinsic nature conservation or scientific value of the site itself.

Environment Policy D

Proposals for development which may result in harm to a specially protected species or its habitat will be allowed only if there is no alternative solution and if there are imperative reasons of overriding public interest.

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6.7. Policy NCON1

Proposals for development must satisfy the requirements of the Bournemouth, Dorset and Poole Structure Plan Environment Policies A to D.

- 6.8. The Structure Plan has no policies relating directly to Local Nature Reserves. The value of these to environmental education may be much greater than the importance of the wildlife they contain, so that they may not be adequately protected under the designations recognised in the Structure Plan policies. The following additional policy is therefore included.

6.9. Policy NCON2

Development proposals which would damage or destroy the integrity of a Local Nature Reserve will only be permitted where the benefits of the development clearly outweigh the loss to nature conservation or environmental education.

- 6.10. Environment Policy E of the Bournemouth, Poole and Dorset Structure Plan seeks the re-establishment of 500 ha of lowland heath adjacent or in close proximity to existing heathlands and also requires the “replacement of appropriate habitats in situations where damage or loss occurs as a result of development.” This is a measure which could mitigate the harm caused by the development and in some cases may make development acceptable which would otherwise have to be refused. The replacement of habitat would, however, almost certainly require a period of prolonged management on the new site for which secure arrangements would have to be made.

6.11. Policy NCON3

Where development is permitted that affects a designated area of nature conservation value, the Council will seek to minimise the harm caused to the nature conservation interest. The Council will consider the use of conditions or planning obligations to secure compensatory measures on site or on nearby land.

- 6.12. The District is particularly rich in lowland heaths; these are now recognised as being of exceptional importance. The Convention on the Conservation of European Wildlife and Natural Habitats (commonly referred to as the Bern Convention) carries obligations to conserve wild plants, birds and other animals, with particular emphasis on endangered and vulnerable species and their habitats. The provisions of the Convention underlie the EC Habitats Directive as well as the UK’s wildlife legislation. Most of the heathlands in East Dorset have been designated as SSSIs under national legislation; large parts have also been designated as Special Protection Areas under the European Birds Directive and proposed as Special Areas of Conservation under the Habitats Directive, or designated under the international Ramsar Convention as important wetland areas.
- 6.13. The Bern Standing Committee in December 1998 adopted Recommendation 67, which set out a number of specific, important measures for the protection of Dorset heathlands which they recommended to the UK Government. These are summarised in the adjoining box.
- 6.14. The national, European and international designations provide very strong protection. They have an important influence on planning strategy as well as on decisions on individual development proposals. The much lower value placed on heathlands before the 1970s meant that in many places urban areas were built on or adjoining them. The increased importance of heathland means that further expansion of these towns, particularly Ferndown, West Moors and St. Leonards and St. Ives, is now heavily constrained. However, the proximity of large urban populations leads to continuing damage through direct and indirect effects including changed hydrology, erosion, enrichment of heathy soils, fires, predation by pets, pollution, trampling by foot and

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- vehicles, and vandalism. It is part of the policy of the Plan to avoid further major development near the remaining heaths which would put further pressures on them.
- 6.15. Many proposed developments will require assessment under the Habitats Regulations to determine their impact and the extent to which this can be mitigated. Both in these and in other cases the Planning Authority, in consultation with nature conservation bodies and in the light of the policies set out in this section, may seek substantial buffer areas between the proposed development and heathland or other nature conservation sites. The extent and design of these buffer areas will depend on the type of development, the characteristics of the individual development site and of the nature conservation interest itself.
- 6.16. Management can help to alleviate some of the problems. The Council works with other public, voluntary and statutory bodies. It owns or leases a small number of heaths itself, and manages them with the prime purpose of conservation, while allowing for recreational use and protecting their landscape value. In addition it provides alternative opportunities for countryside recreation, including the major sub-regional facility of Moors Valley Country Park, reducing pressures on more fragile areas. Other heathlands in the District are under the ownership and protection of nature conservation bodies, including English Nature, the RSPB, the Herpetological Conservation Trust and the Dorset Wildlife Trust. A major project to tackle existing human threats to Dorset's urban heathlands, by providing better protection from fire and a major schools and community education programme is being funded under the European Life Programme and the Council is a participating member of this. The Planning Authority may also seek developer contributions towards management schemes to mitigate the impacts of developments.
- 6.17. While management can reduce the conflicts between competing demands, they cannot wholly be overcome. The Council recognises the primacy of nature conservation on the protected sites, and will work with English Nature towards achieving the favourable conservation status of these European heathlands. However, on the urban fringe, heathlands also have an important role in providing for informal countryside recreation and in forming part of the landscape setting of the urban areas. There will therefore be limits both on the recreational use, on the protection of landscape and valued woodland areas, and on the aspirations for the nature conservation interest that may be more easily achievable in a rural setting. Other heathlands, especially Holt Heath and the southern parts of Avon Heath Country Park, have particular importance because of their size and relative remoteness, which reduce the risk or impact of damage. On these the needs of nature conservation will be more predominant.
- 6.18. Heathland re-creation is another important measure. The last century in particular saw a major reduction in the Dorset heaths and the fragmentation of much of the remainder. Efforts are now being made to recreate some of their former extent and to reconnect some of the fragments. Regional Planning Guidance sets a target for creation of lowland heath in the Region of 5,000 ha by 2010.⁵⁷ The Bournemouth, Dorset and Poole Structure Plan Environment Policy E seeks the re-establishment of 500 ha of lowland heath adjacent or in close proximity to existing heathlands by 2011. Substantial areas of existing heathland in Dorset are already being restored, in particular by the clearance of afforested areas by the Forestry Commission and the removal of scrub and invasive pine woodland. Work is currently co-ordinated through the 'Hardy's Egdon Heath Project', supported by the Heritage Lottery Fund. The District Council does not itself hold any extensive, uncommitted areas of land on which heathland restoration could take place, nor does it have the financial resources to make a major contribution to this programme. However, as a Planning Authority it may seek the compensatory creation of heathland by developers to offset the impact of their developments. Specific policies within the settlement chapters of this Plan indicate areas where heathland restoration could occur.

⁵⁷ Regional Planning Guidance for the South West (RPG 10), September 2001, Table 4, page 47, and Policy EN1, page 51.

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Recommendations of the Bern Convention Standing Committee to the UK Government under Recommendation 67 of December 1998 on Dorset Heathlands:⁵⁸

- to establish a policy to maintain and improve existing heathland and create new heaths from woodland and agricultural land
- consider reducing more surface of woodland to heath
- no further loss or degradation of heathland to be permitted
- provide alternative, diversionary facilities for intensive recreation and otherwise damaging recreational facilities such as All Terrain Biking
- ensure that enough human and material resources are available to restore heathlands that have been damaged by fire
- restoration and protection of fire damaged heaths
- avoidance of further development close to heathland
- creation of buffer zones around heathlands
- to avoid the provision of recreation areas associated with new housing within heathland areas
- to avoid new roads on or immediately near heathland
- ensure mineral extraction does not take place in heathland
- to regulate public access and recreational use of heathland
- to reinforce wardening and promote co-operation between the statutory authorities and nature conservation organisations
- to promote the use of imaginative fire breaks which do not attract public incursion onto the heathland, the collaboration of residents in fire prevention and improvement of fire fighting facilities
- to facilitate the participation of volunteers and schools in heathland conservation

6.19. Policy NCON4

In recognition of the importance, the decline and the vulnerability of heathland in East Dorset and in order to reflect heathland restoration targets in the Structure Plan, the Council will:

- a) not permit new development that would result in the direct loss of heathland unless there are compelling reasons of overriding public interest that outweigh the nature conservation importance of the land;**
- b) not permit new development that would result in the direct loss of heathland quality of nearby sites through recreation or other access uses, unless there is provision of adequate alternative open space and effective buffer zones to minimise damage by public intrusion;**

⁵⁸ Summary of recommendations of the Bern Convention Standing Committee to the UK Government under Recommendation 67 of December 1998 on Dorset Heathlands

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- c) **seek, through the use of conditions or agreements, the re-creation and re-establishment of heathland, where opportunities arise, particularly on sites adjacent to or in close proximity to existing areas of heathland.**

6.20. It would be a mistake to consider that the only areas of wildlife importance are the designated sites protected by the forgoing policies. These represent the areas of the highest value, but they are part of a much wider natural and semi-natural landscape which supports the wildlife of the County, and it is unlikely that they could be conserved in isolation. This is recognised in national guidance.⁵⁹ While developments will necessarily take place in various parts of the District, it will be important that they are sensitive to wildlife issues, and are sited and designed to protect as much as possible those features which are of importance. These will particularly include linear features such as hedgerows, streams, shelter belts, and green lanes which form important wildlife corridors connecting other sites. This is taken into account in the policies on landscaping for development in Section 3 of this Chapter.

6.21. Policy NCON5

Development which adversely affects features such as small woods, trees, tree belts, earthworks, green lanes or drove roads, hedges, ponds, watercourses, walls, or open spaces will be permitted where the need for that development outweighs the likely impact on the nature conservation interest of that feature. Measures will be taken to minimise any impact of any development, including the provision of compensatory features on site or on nearby land.

Rivers

6.22. Policies for the protection of rivers of importance for nature conservation are included in the next section.

The Water Environment

6.23. The water environment of the District permeates the whole area. Rivers, ponds, lakes and watercourses are important for their contribution to the landscape, for their value for nature conservation, for recreation, as sources of water supply and, in the case of rivers and streams, as the channels which drain the area. Underground waters are principally important as resources for water supply and as the reservoirs and sources of water in streams, rivers and lakes. There is a constant process of exchange between surface and underground waters.

6.24. Many forms of human activity can affect the water environment, sometimes with benefit as where schemes protect against flooding or new lakes are created, sometimes damagingly as where rivers are straightened and their natural qualities are lost or where waters are polluted. Only some of these impacts arise from 'development' in the sense covered by planning legislation, and which are therefore subject to planning control.

6.25. The Environment Agency for England and Wales is responsible for the protection and improvement of the environment as a whole by combining the regulation of air, land and water which includes managing the use of the inland and underground waters in the area it has responsibility for issuing licences for the abstraction of water and discharge consents for trade effluent or sewage. Developers who wish to create new discharges - for example from septic tanks or surface water drains - will need to obtain discharge consents in addition to any planning permission which is needed for the development. The Environment Agency works closely with the Ministry of Agriculture, individual farmers, landowners and Forest Enterprise to control the impact of farming

⁵⁹ PPG 9 paras 16 and 23: these refer to the Habitats Directive and the Habitats Regulations 1994, esp. Regulation 37.

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and forestry operations on surface and underground waters. The Agency's powers under the Environmental Protection Act 1990, including Integrated Pollution Control Authorisations and Waste Management Licensing, also take into account the potential impacts of development and industrial processes on the water environment. These authorisations will be required in addition to any planning permission granted.

- 6.26. Under the Water Resources Act 1991 and the Land Drainage Act 1991 the Environment Agency has the powers to consent structures such as culverts, bridges and dams, which may cause an obstruction to flow in watercourses. This consent is required in addition to any planning permission granted for a development. The Agency receives a large number of requests to culvert watercourses. The Agency has a presumption against the culverting of any watercourses unless there is no viable alternative, for example where it is necessary to provide access. Culverting is expensive and culverts can and do become blocked, so worsening existing flooding problems, or can create new flooding problems if they are incorrectly designed or installed, while the ecological value of the culverted watercourse is usually completely lost. Watercourses enhance an area and their retention is encouraged: the Environment Agency is willing to provide advice to enable a developer to enhance the water environment.
- 6.27. The public water supply in the area is provided by the Bournemouth and District and West Hampshire Water companies, and by Wessex Water plc. There are also many private water sources, a few for human consumption and many more for agriculture or industry. The local public sewerage systems for both foul and surface water are run by Wessex Water plc., which is the local sewerage undertaker, and which also operates the main sewage treatment works.
- 6.28. The policies which follow deal only with 'development' in the planning sense, and do not replace the systems of control available to the Environment Agency or other bodies such as English Nature or the Ministry of Agriculture. Because many of the impacts of development on the water environment affect different interests of importance, proposals may fall under more than one of the following policies, which have been grouped as far as possible to reflect these different interests. These are: the protection of groundwater from stored or process materials; provision for foul drainage and trade effluent; provision for surface water drainage; flood risk and floodplains, and the conservation of the natural qualities of rivers.

Groundwater and Surface Water Resources

- 6.29. It is important to ensure that development does not pose a risk to the quantity, quality and availability of surface and underground water resources
- 6.30. Almost the whole of East Dorset is underlain by aquifers from which water supplies are already drawn, or which may provide important resources for the future. The South East Dorset conurbation, with its large population and economic importance, is heavily dependent on supplies from groundwater and river sources in East Dorset. In the South Wessex Area, which includes East Dorset, groundwater meets about 75% of total demand. It is therefore essential that groundwater and surface waters should be protected from risk of pollution or over-abstraction, both of which can result from development. Once pollution enters groundwater, it may prove impractical or impossible to remove, and the resource may be lost permanently
- 6.31. Because of the fundamental importance of groundwater, and the serious and often irreversible consequences of pollution or other damage, policies must work on the precautionary principle. Policies must also take account of the impact of development on the quantity and quality of surface waters. Developments may be well designed, and initially well-managed and maintained. However, despite the monitoring powers of local authorities and the Environment Agency, constant and continuing security against leaks, spillages, or poor management cannot be completely assured, especially where processes, occupiers or operators may change without the need for

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further planning permissions. It is important that the Agency is informed by owners/occupiers when a process is likely to change in order that the risk to the water environment can be reassessed.

- 6.32. Most development will result in additional demand for water. The provision of public water supply from groundwater can have an adverse impact on surface waters. Consideration needs to be given, therefore, to which supply source will service this increased demand and how this will impact on the surface water environment. The supply of water for a development should ensure that due consideration has been given to the management of water resources by measures to control waste and manage demand and to make best use of existing resources, before the Agency would consider licensing additional resources. Discussions will therefore need to be take place with both the relevant Water Company and the Environment Agency before the development takes place.
- 6.33. The policies in this Plan distinguish between different parts of the District. The whole area is underlain by a resource which requires general protection and general policies will apply throughout. Additional parts of the policies apply to zones defined by the Environment Agency around existing, major public and large private potable groundwater sources. These Groundwater Source Protection Areas (GSPAs) cover the complete area of a groundwater source. All groundwater within them will eventually discharge to the source and they are defined as an area needed to support abstraction from long term annual groundwater recharge. The GSPAs may be redefined as knowledge increases or as other factors affecting the groundwater come into play. Because they are subject to continuing revision, they are not shown on the Proposal and Inset Maps but are published as Supplementary Planning Guidance. The Environment Agency has now published a 'Policy and Practice for the Protection of Groundwater, 1998'. The document sets out a series of statements on Agency policy with respect to groundwater. This not only refers to Source Protection Areas as discussed above, but also to the protection of the groundwater resource. In order to assess the impact of development on the resource, a classification of groundwater vulnerability is used, including a programme of vulnerability mapping. The Agency will take this Policy into account when it is consulted on planning proposals.

6.34. Policy WENV1

Development which would place an unacceptable risk upon the water quality, quantity or natural flow patterns of a groundwater resource will not be permitted. This is especially important within the groundwater Source Protection Areas defined in Supplementary Planning Guidance and also where land may have been subject to previous contamination.

Flood Risk and Floodplains

- 6.35. Development in undefended areas where the known risk of flooding is greater than, or equal to, 1% will only be allowed if a sequential analysis shows that there are no other suitable sites at a lower level of flood risk and a Flood Risk Assessment shows that the flood risk consequences of the proposal, after any necessary mitigation, are acceptable.
- 6.36. Except for essential transport and utilities infrastructure, or, recreation, sport, amenity or conservation uses, development in undefended undeveloped or sparsely developed areas where the known risk of flooding is greater than or equal to 1%, will not be allowed, irrespective of any flood risk mitigation measures incorporated into the scheme. Development of the type listed in this paragraph will only be allowed if a sequential analysis shows that there are no other sites available with a lower risk of flooding and a Flood Risk Assessment shows that the flood risk implications of the proposal, after any necessary mitigation, are acceptable.

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- 6.37. Whether development is proposed in developed or undeveloped and sparsely developed areas, it will only be approved in a location where flood water frequently passes, or where it is behind an inadequate defence, if it is for essential transport and utilities infrastructure, or recreation, sport, amenity or conservation uses. A sequential analysis must show that there are no other sites available with a lower risk of flooding. A Flood Risk Assessment must show that the flood risk implications of the proposal, after any necessary mitigation, are acceptable.
- 6.38. It is also necessary to ensure that proposals do not interfere with flood defence operation and maintenance.

6.39. Policy WENV2

Within an undefended flood risk area a proposal in a developed area will only be permitted provided that criteria (a) and (b) below are fulfilled.

Within an undefended flood risk area a proposal in an undeveloped or sparsely developed area will only be permitted if it is essential transport and utilities infrastructure, or a recreation, sport, amenity or conservation use, and criteria (a) and (b) below are fulfilled.

A proposal whether in an undeveloped or developed area which is known to be sited where flood water frequently passes, or where defences are inadequate and there could be rapid inundation, will only be permitted if it is essential transport and utilities infrastructure, or a recreation, sport, amenity or conservation use and criteria (a) and (b) below are fulfilled:

- (a) **a sequential test satisfactorily shows that there are no other suitable sites with a lower risk of flooding; and**
- (b) **a Flood Risk Assessment satisfactorily demonstrates that measures incorporated into the scheme would prevent either life being endangered or an unacceptable likelihood of damage to property.**

6.40. Policy WENV3

Development within either a defended or undefended flood risk area will only be permitted provided that the proposal does not harm the integrity or maintenance of a watercourse for the purpose of minimising flood risk.

- 6.41. The Undefended and Defended Flood Risk Areas which Policies WENV2 and WENV3 relate to are shown in the document SUPPLEMENTARY PLANNING GUIDANCE: FLOOD RISK. The Flood Risk Areas that are shown have been provided by the Environment Agency from survey maps compiled under Section 105 of the Water Resources Act 1991. It should be emphasised that there may be places outside these areas, for example close to an 'ordinary' watercourse, where there is presently no flood risk mapping information where the above policies may still be applied.

Conservation of Rivers

- 6.42. There are two river systems in the District which are of exceptional importance for nature conservation. These are the River Crane, which becomes the Moors River in its lower reaches, and the River Avon. Both are designated as SSSIs over parts of their lengths. The other two principal rivers which flow through the District, the River Stour and River Allen, are not designated SSSIs but are important aesthetically, for recreation and for fishing and support important communities of plants and animals including native crayfish, and otter and water vole populations.

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- 6.43. Development may have a wide range of effects on these rivers. It may increase the risk of pollution, or affect water chemistry even where water entering the river is “clean”; it may affect the quantity of water, the speed of flow or the extent of flooding, or bring disturbance to wildlife. Development can also result in changes to the physical character of rivers, with a loss of variety and ‘naturalness’ and their transformation into artificial, ‘canalised’ channels, or the intrusion of new building into the green corridors which form the setting of the rivers. Other, well-designed development proposals may be entirely compatible with protection of rivers and watercourses and their landscape, or may bring about positive improvements to them.

6.44. Policy WENV4

Development should be sited and designed to protect or enhance the visual and physical quality and natural history interest of rivers or their tributaries, and their landscape settings. The policy will apply to the following rivers:

**Allen
Ashford Water
Avon
Crane / Moors River
Stour
Uddens Water
North Winterbourne**

Archæology

- 6.45. East Dorset is rich in archaeological sites. These represent a finite and non-renewable part of the local and national cultural heritage, which requires careful protection to ensure its survival.
- 6.46. Features of archaeological interest in the District span the history of man since the Ice Age. In particular there are very important Neolithic and Iron Age sites that are unique to the Country. Additionally, there are significant Roman features and later Norman and medieval sites. The knowledge gained so far about the District leads to the conclusion that it is so rich in archaeological material that careful assessment is required when development is proposed.
- 6.47. The Proposals Map identifies the location of all the Scheduled Ancient Monuments. These are the most important known sites of archaeological interest. However, there are many other sites that have an archaeological significance that should be taken into account when making land use decisions. Dorset County Council has detailed records of all known sites of archaeological interest. These are being constantly updated as sites of archaeological importance are identified and investigated. Additionally, there are many sites of archaeological importance that have not yet been identified. Developers are advised to consult the County Archaeologist when considering their proposals.

6.48. Policy ARCON1

The archaeological aspects of development proposals shall need to be examined and evaluated before a planning application is determined. Archaeological remains and ancient monuments of national importance will be preserved *in situ* together with their settings. On other sites development may be permitted where its importance outweighs the archaeological interest and where adequate provision is made for preserving the archaeology of the site either *in situ* or by record, whichever is the most appropriate.

Protection of Agricultural Land

6.49. The best and most versatile agricultural land (usually defined as Grades 1, 2 and 3a in the MAFF agricultural land quality classification) is an important national resource for the long term.⁶⁰ Once developed for other uses it is seldom practicable to restore it to its former quality. The District contains only limited areas of land in these categories and there is therefore little need for development to take place within them. The following policy will therefore be applied. Although the broad extent of the areas of best land is known, their boundaries have not been defined with sufficient precision to allow them to appear on the Proposals Map. More detailed investigation may be required at the time of a planning application to provide sufficient information to allow a decision to be taken upon it.

6.50. Policy AGCON1

The development of agricultural land for non-agricultural or forestry purposes will only be permitted where there are no opportunities for that development to take place on previously developed sites, or on land within existing urban areas. Where development of agricultural land is unavoidable, land of the lowest grades should be used, except where other sustainability considerations outweigh the loss of best and most versatile land.

Countryside Policies

6.51. It is national policy⁶¹ that development in the countryside should both benefit economic activity and maintain or enhance the environment. New development should be sensitively related to existing settlement patterns and to historic, wildlife and landscape resources. Building in the open countryside, away from existing settlements or from areas allocated for development in development plans, should be strictly controlled. In areas statutorily designated for their landscape, wildlife or historic qualities, policies give greater priority to restraint. It is likewise the policy of the Structure Plan (Settlement Policy G) that development in the countryside outside identified settlements should be permitted only where such a location is essential. This approach is reflected in the strategy pursued by this Local Plan, which is set out in Chapter 5. This gives high importance to protecting the rural areas which, in East Dorset, have been threatened by the spread of scattered suburban development, particularly in the south and east of the District.

6.52. At the same time it is both national and Structure Plan policy that the rural economy should be diversified, to provide a wider variety of local job opportunities, and housing permitted where it would sustain the viability of village communities. Policies and proposals for both of these are included in this Local Plan, while providing necessary policies for the restriction of development in other areas or in unsuitable settlements. The policies allow for the re-use of appropriate existing buildings on farms and in the open countryside for employment purposes. The local area chapters of this Plan include proposals for new development on specific sites in selected settlements, which can provide employment to their surrounding areas.

⁶⁰ Planning Policy Guidance Note 7 (February 1997), paras 2.16 - 2.20.

⁶¹ Planning Policy Guidance Note 7 (February 1997), para 2.3

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There is often some ambiguity in the use of the terms 'rural' and 'countryside' in planning documents. In many publications the terms 'countryside', or 'rural areas', are used in ways which imply the inclusion of villages and towns up to a certain size: where the size is defined it is often at levels, such as 10,000 population, which include substantial urban areas. Other publications refer to 'open countryside' also without defining this term. In the remainder of this chapter and in subsequent chapters of the Plan, the **countryside** is taken to exclude all the urban areas, which are defined on the Proposals Map. It does, however, include other settlements ranging from villages down to individual farms or cottages. Policy envelopes have been defined in those villages where further development of dwellings will be permitted. For the purposes of this Plan, where it is necessary to draw a distinction, the areas outside these village policy envelopes, including farms and other small or scattered settlements, are termed **open countryside**.

- 6.53. The first part of this section contains general policies which apply in all the open countryside areas (with some specific exceptions which are noted in the policies themselves). Additional policies will apply in the Green Belt, in the Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty and to protect landscape areas in other parts of the District, and these are set out in the later part of this section.
- 6.54. Some general policies for development in villages are included in this Chapter, but specific proposals for individual settlements are made in the chapters on the particular local areas.

General Countryside Policies



- 6.55. As it is a general principle of national policy that development in the open countryside will be strictly controlled, the following policy sets out the circumstances in which development will be permitted outside the policy envelopes defined for towns and villages: within these, less restrictive policies will apply. It will be important that all development should be sited and designed to avoid damage to the countryside, and the policies on design and landscaping development in Section 3 of this Chapter will be particularly relevant.

6.56. Policy CSIDE1

Development which would damage the rural character of the countryside will not be permitted. New buildings or other physical developments including car parking will only be permitted in the open countryside outside defined village policy envelopes where they are:

- (a) **required for agricultural, farm diversification or forestry purposes which cannot be accommodated in existing buildings; or**
- (b) **small scale developments ancillary to outdoor recreational use; or**
- (c) **for service infrastructure for which a countryside location is essential; and**
- (d) **will not harm the visual amenities of the countryside by reason of the scale, siting, materials and design of any structures used, or car parking.**

Where new buildings are permitted they should be located so as to form a group with existing buildings wherever possible. In cases where this is not possible,

buildings, car parking areas and any other new structures should be sited where they will be well screened and unobtrusive in the landscape.

Re-use of Existing Buildings

- 6.57. In order to encourage farm diversification and employment opportunities in the countryside, the re-use of buildings for employment, tourism or recreational uses will be encouraged. The re-use of buildings for housing is a considerably less desirable alternative, reducing the opportunities for creating rural employment and leading to a scatter of dwellings and population, so encouraging unsustainable patterns of settlement and travel. Conversion of existing buildings to dwellings would also be more likely to damage the character both of the building itself and of the surrounding countryside because of the need for subdivision within the building, the provision of windows, the enclosure of land for gardens, and the provision of parking and garaging, among other factors.
- 6.58. In order to provide adequate information for the Local Planning Authority to judge whether a proposal meets the criteria of the Policy, planning applications for the conversion of existing rural buildings may need to be accompanied by any of the following:
- (a) an independent structural report detailing the present structural condition of the building and any structural work necessary to carry out the proposed development;
 - (b) plans of the existing and proposed elevations, floor layout and sections clearly indicating any new or replacement components;
 - (c) details of any statutory protected species occupying the building and its curtilage, together with how they are to be safeguarded during the development;
 - (d) a plan indicating the proposed curtilage of the development and how it will be defined on the ground; and
 - (e) a chronological history of the building detailing when it was constructed and its original and subsequent functions as far as they may be ascertained.

6.59. Policy CSIDE2

The re-use for employment, tourism or recreational uses of existing buildings in the open countryside will be permitted subject to the specific criteria set out below. Conversion to dwellings will be allowed where the building is incapable of reasonably beneficial use through re-use or conversion for any of the forgoing, or where it would provide accommodation for an agricultural or forestry worker, or where the residential accommodation was a subordinate and enabling part of an employment conversion scheme, where:

- (a) **the buildings are of a form, bulk and general design in keeping with the rural area both currently and after any conversion, are a permanent and substantial construction and capable of conversion without major or complete reconstruction, suitable for the use proposed and can be expected to last for many years with normal repair and maintenance; and**
- (b) **the change of use or any necessary associated works will not result in the loss of character or integrity of the structure of the buildings; and**
- (c) **the proposed use will not include requirements for open storage, areas for vehicle parking; or other associated development that would detract unacceptably from the character of the area; and**

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- (d) **the development will not generate traffic likely to either damage rural roads or result in a significant change in character of the road or its use; and**
- (e) **the building will be of adequate size to accommodate the proposed use without the need for significant additions or extensions.**

Agricultural and Forestry Dwellings

6.60. The pressure for development in the countryside (and especially within the Green Belt) is intense, and spurious applications for new accommodation claimed to be essential for agriculture and forestry workers are proposed from time to time. The Local Planning Authority must therefore be satisfied that the need for either a caravan or a permanent dwelling is essential, and in the latter case that the dwelling is a relatively modest one suitable for its long term retention for the needs of agriculture locally.

6.61. The following policy will be used to determine applications for farm workers' and managers' dwellings. The functional test of the policy will require that the dwelling is not wanted simply as a matter of convenience or security but is essential for the proper functioning of the holding throughout the year, at unsocial times and where a quick response is needed. The test of whether the operations for which the worker's housing is needed are capable of being sustained over a reasonable period of time, will take into account such factors as whether there is evidence that the holding has a sound financial basis and has every prospect of continuing in operation even under different ownership. Additionally, account will be given of the higher risks associated with intensive operations on small-sized holdings, or those reliant upon a narrow range of produce, or of a disproportionately high capital value of the dwelling on the holding. The test also requires that the housing is to be provided for a worker who is appropriately skilled and committed to carry out the work for which it is claimed the housing is needed. Account will be given to whether there has recently, or is presently available a nearby dwelling that could be used for the purpose. Finally, if there is a suitable redundant building that could meet the requirements, then this should be preferred to a new building in the countryside.

6.62. Policy CSIDE3

New permanent or temporary housing for workers in agriculture or forestry will be permitted outside the village policy envelopes defined on the Proposals Map where it is essential for the proper management of a holding that a person reside on the site. The need for the housing will be judged against the following criteria:

- a) **that the dwelling is essential in that location to house a worker who must be readily available at most times for the proper functioning of the holding; and**
- b) **there is a clearly established existing functional need; and**
- c) **the unit and the agricultural activity concerned have been established for at least 3 years, have been profitable for at least one of them, are currently financially sound, and have a clear prospect of remaining so; and**
- d) **that a dwelling serving or closely connected with the holding has not recently been sold separately or otherwise alienated from the holding; and**
- e) **that there is not a suitable redundant building on or adjoining the holding which is capable of being converted for accommodation purposes; and**

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- f) **that there is not another available dwelling on the farm unit or other suitable alternative accommodation in the locality which could meet the functional need.**

6.63. In some cases the sustainability of a new agricultural holding, including its financial sustainability, may be uncertain and a permanent dwelling therefore will not be justified under the forgoing policy. However, in cases where the prospects of the enterprise appear to favour a dwelling in the future and to allow its prospects to be clarified, a temporary planning permission may be granted for the siting of a caravan. This will normally be for a period not exceeding three years in order to provide an adequate period for the enterprise to demonstrate its prospects without allowing a quasi-permanent dwelling to be established by default. As the caravan may be replaced by a permanent dwelling it will need to be sited on the land where a permanent agricultural worker's dwelling would be acceptable. Such a temporary permission will not be extended; and a subsequent permanent dwelling will only be permitted where it meets the criteria set out in the previous policy.

6.64. Policy CSIDE4

Where under the preceding policy there may be justification for a dwelling but the sustainability of a new agricultural holding is uncertain, a temporary planning permission will be granted for up to three years for the siting of a caravan in a location where a permanent agricultural worker's dwelling would otherwise be acceptable.

6.65. In granting permissions the size of the dwelling should reflect the agricultural need and not the individual aspirations or circumstances of applicants. This is to avoid large dwellings being built in the countryside which are disproportionate to the needs of the holding which they serve. These may then become subject to pressure for release from agricultural occupancy because of the difference between their open market value and the price which a wholly agricultural worker can afford.

6.66. Policy CSIDE5

Agricultural dwellings which are of an excessive size or which are disproportionate to the income generated by the holding for the worker in question will not be permitted.

6.67. Agricultural workers' dwellings are permitted in the open countryside in locations where new dwellings would not normally be acceptable, in order to meet the clearly established needs of agriculture or forestry in the area. To ensure that the dwellings remain available to meet such needs while these continue to exist, conditions will be placed on their occupation. However, circumstances may arise where it would be reasonable for such Agricultural Occupancy conditions to be relaxed. The following policy therefore sets out the criteria against which such applications will need to be justified.

6.68. Policy CSIDE6

Agricultural dwellings will have their occupancy limited by condition. These conditions will only be relaxed where:

- (a) **the dwelling is no longer needed for the working of the land to which it relates; and**
- (b) **the dwelling is not needed in relation to other agricultural or forestry land in the locality; and**

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- (c) **significant attempts have been made over a reasonable period to sell or lease the dwelling at a price which realistically reflects the occupancy condition.**

Countryside Recreation

- 6.69. The countryside is widely used for informal recreation, particularly through its network of rights of way and wider areas of land such as woodlands, commons and country parks to which there is public access. Facilities for more formal recreation, such as outdoor sport and allotments, are also appropriate uses for land in the countryside where they do not conflict with the protection of those features which contribute to its rural character, including its tranquillity, beauty, the diversity of its landscape, the wealth of its natural resources and its ecological and agricultural value. Facilities may include sports fields fishing lakes allotments, golf courses and other forms of recreation which are neither unusually noisy nor require large or obtrusive buildings. Land within the Green Belt in particular is likely to be used for outdoor recreation, although associated new buildings will only be allowed where they provide essential facilities for outdoor sport and outdoor recreation and must be small and unobtrusive.
- 6.70. Rural land uses such as forestry, farming and horticulture as well as sites which are of value for nature conservation, and even adjoining housing, are susceptible to disruption and damage from trespass and vandalism. Recreation land can extend the areas liable to suffer from these problems and therefore recreation sites need to be securely bounded. Equally, recreational sites can be noisy and unless carefully sited and well-designed can damage the privacy and amenity of any nearby housing. The visual impact of recreational developments will also be an important consideration, particularly within the Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty and Areas of Great Landscape Value.
- 6.71. Golf courses may not only disrupt the landscape but are particularly heavy users of water and in summer, when flows and reserves are at their lowest, can create damaging demands for additional water extraction from rivers and other sources. For this reason, development for golf courses may need to include reservoirs for water storage.

6.72. Policy CSIDE7

Outdoor sport, recreation and allotment uses will be permitted in the countryside where the site proposed is enclosed by boundaries which will prevent or substantially deter trespass onto neighbouring farmland, commercial woodland, sites of nature conservation importance or residential areas.

Golf courses will be expected to include facilities for the storage of rainwater or stream flows for use for summer irrigation unless adequate alternative sources are available.

Horses and Stables

- 6.73. Horse riding and related activities are an increasingly popular form of outdoor countryside recreation. They frequently require the construction of new buildings, access roads and parking areas. The general countryside policies on the siting and design of new buildings and structures will apply to these. Outside the green belt, (where the overriding considerations of green belt policy will apply) new dwellings for workers at horse riding establishments will be judged on similar criteria to those set out within Policy CSIDE3 (para. 6.62). In addition, development involving horses may be a poor neighbour for existing housing because of such factors as smells, flies, disturbance and loss of privacy.

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6.74. The horse traffic which such developments generate may pose particular difficulties. Dangers can arise where a new development leads to horses having to use roads where they face conflict with motor traffic. Equally, horses can themselves create problems for nature conservation by disturbance and trampling and can damage rights of way. The policies for nature conservation set out earlier in this Chapter will apply to these, as to other developments, and will need to be taken into consideration not only where the development is itself within a protected site, but also where it may lead to damage, for example of neighbouring heathland through increased use.

6.75. Policy CSIDE8

Development of land for the keeping of horses, for the erection of stables, or for commercial equestrian uses such as riding schools and arenas, stud farms and racing or livery stables should not:

- (a) **lead to regular use of local highways or public rights of way which will result in an identifiable threat to the safety of their users; nor**
- (b) **lead to a predictable requirement for supporting development which would be contrary to Green Belt policy; nor**
- (c) **be likely to lead to unacceptable damage and erosion of public rights of way, unacceptable harm to wildlife and to designated areas of nature conservation interest.**

Landscape Protection

6.76. The countryside of East Dorset contains areas covered by both national and strategic policy designations. Part lies within the Cranborne Chase and West Wiltshire Downs Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB); part falls within the South East Dorset Green Belt. The AONB and Green Belt overlap in some places. Parts of the countryside outside the AONB are also of high landscape quality, and policies in this Plan designate these areas as being Areas of Great Landscape Value (AGLV).

Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty



6.77. The policies contained in this section will apply within the Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) in addition to those general countryside policies set out earlier in this Chapter. The Cranborne Chase and West Wiltshire Downs Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty is of national importance, and the primary purpose of the designation is to conserve and enhance its natural beauty. However, the designation does not preclude development to meet the needs of agriculture, forestry and other rural industries, or the economic and social needs of local communities. While providing for countryside recreation is not one of the purposes of the AONB, neither does it prevent these needs being met so long as this does not conflict with the conservation of the natural beauty of the area.

6.78. The Countryside Commission has produced a landscape assessment of the AONB (Countryside Commission publication number CCP 465). The District Council has also carried out and published a more detailed landscape assessment of the part of the AONB within its own area. In assessing the impact of proposed developments upon the AONB, the Local Planning Authority will take these landscape analyses into account. The District Council's own Landscape Assessment will be treated as

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Supplementary Planning Guidance. While the AONB in its title refers to 'natural' beauty, it is important to recognise that much of the landscape is man-made, and that the archaeological features and monuments, the patterns of land use and farming, woodlands, historic buildings and villages are inseparable elements of the landscape beauty of the area.

- 6.79. Policies will protect the existing landscape and character of the AONB. Developments outside the village policy envelopes will generally be restricted under the other countryside policies to those which are essential to maintain or diversify the rural economy, or which are desirable for the enjoyment of its amenities.
- 6.80. No major commercial or industrial development is proposed within the AONB in this Plan and applications for any such development would need to be justified by showing a proven national interest and a lack of alternative sites. The policies towards other development proposals take account of the primary objective of the AONB, which is the conservation of the natural beauty of the area. There are a number of important factors, which contribute to landscape character including its flora, fauna and historic heritage. The conservation of the landscape should imply positive management and enhancement rather than simple preservation.
- 6.81. Where development in the AONB is acceptable in principle, special emphasis will be placed on scale, location and siting. A particularly high standard of design and landscaping will be required, and new buildings must be in sympathy with their surroundings and respect features of importance for the character of the area. A visual appraisal of development proposals and their acceptability in the wider landscape may be required by the Planning Authority to provide sufficient information to determine planning applications. However, this will seldom be necessary for minor developments especially those within the 'village infill' policy envelope boundaries defined on the Proposals Map.
- 6.82. Development such as golf courses, noisy sports or developments requiring the provision of extensive overhead services or car parks will be judged against the provisions of Policy LSCON1. Because of their inherent nature, the planning authority will need to be convinced that the proposals would not conflict with the primary aim of AONB designation, to conserve the natural beauty of the landscape, before permission will be granted.

6.83. Policy LSCON1

Within the Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty, as shown on the Proposals Map, development which would harm the natural beauty of the landscape will not be permitted. Major industrial or commercial development will only be permitted where there is an overriding national interest and a lack of alternative sites.

Areas of Great Landscape Value

- 6.84. The Planning Authority has also carried out and published an appraisal of the landscape outside the AONB to define areas of more local landscape importance. While these areas lack the national renown of the AONB or its wide extent, on a smaller scale and within the local area they are of high value as areas of unspoiled countryside, with a strong historical dimension, containing many traditional cottages and farm buildings, and forming attractive, richly-varied human and natural landscapes. As such they warrant recognition and protection. They have therefore been designated as Areas of Great Landscape Value (AGLVs) and will be protected. Account will be taken not only of the direct impacts of any proposed development but also of associated impacts which might flow from it such as increased pressure for road widening and straightening, or the provision of overhead services. The landscape appraisal will be treated as Supplementary Planning Guidance and will assist in the preparation and promotion of conservation, enhancement and management measures, and of developments which enhance the landscape quality and character.

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- 6.85. Four separate areas have been defined, each with its particular characteristics.
- 6.86. The first is an extensive area of about 50km², stretching from Ashford Water and Crendell in the north to Holt Heath in the south and centred upon the neighbourhood of the settlement of Woodlands. This is a transitional area, having soils mostly derived from the underlying clays, between the chalk of Cranborne Chase and the acidic lowland sands of Ringwood Forest. It has a great variety of landscapes within its small compass, ranging from the enclosure afforded by its hills and extensive woodlands to the exposure of its heathland and the often spectacular long distance views from its hilltops. There is an irregular pattern of roads, with few main routes and narrow winding lanes with dense hedgerows, ancient woodlands with a predominance of oak, including Holt Forest, and many farms and cottages. Holt Heath, and Cranborne Common are among the largest remaining unfragmented areas of Dorset heathland now remaining.
- 6.87. The area also contains the dominating historic folly of Horton Tower, and Horton itself, an important village Conservation Area, as well as many vernacular buildings. Monmouth's Ash and the Remedy Oak are two locally important historic sites. The conifer plantations adjoining Cranborne Common and Holt Heath are excluded, as are the despoiled landscapes of Horton Common, and the settlements of Holt, Gaunt's Common and Holt Wood with their intrusive modern housing.
- 6.88. The second area is a narrow, irregularly shaped tract of land on the west bank of the River Avon, south of Ashley Heath. Traversed by the busy A338 Bournemouth Spur Road, it contains heathland and wooded hills sloping sharply down to the contrasting level meadowlands of the river valley. It includes Matchams View, an elevated open space forming part of the Avon Heath Country Park, from which there are extensive views down the valley to Christchurch and Hengistbury Head. The area is one of sandy soils, with much pine and birch woodland in addition to its heaths, steep slopes and few visible signs of development. Avon Castle, a low density suburb to the north-east, and areas of despoiled landscape at the Barnsfield Wood military vehicle test site and at Matchams Park, are excluded.
- 6.89. The third area embraces the Stour valley above Wimborne, together with an area of chalk downland stretching south westwards to Mapperton and Almer which also contains part of the valley of the Winterbourne, and part of the historic landscape parkland of Charborough House. The area as a whole is one of open landscape, predominantly agricultural with nucleated settlements and few other buildings. The Stour valley above Wimborne is largely unspoiled, in contrast to the section downstream, and forms the major landscape feature of the area. Its northern slope is largely within the AONB. The area includes the well preserved historic landscape around Pamphill and Cowgrove, much of which is owned inalienably by the National Trust and many of whose hedgerows date back to the fourteenth century, as well as reputedly the oldest bridge in Dorset at White Mill, and the Conservation Area villages of Shapwick, Mapperton and Almer. Sturminster Marshall with its modern development is excluded.
- 6.90. The fourth area is smaller, covering about 10km², west of Corfe Mullen, which enjoys extensive views over it. The Waterloo Valley, immediately adjoining the built-up area, is a patchwork of small, enclosed fields and paddocks, giving way to more extensive woodland on the hills further west. This in turn passes into an open, large scale agricultural landscape, typical of the chalk, extending from Henbury House to Coombe Almer. The whole area has an undulating landform, punctuated by hilltops, and heavily influenced by woods, copses and hedgerow trees.

6.91. Policy LSCON2

Within the Areas of Great Landscape Value, shown on the Proposals Map, development will be permitted where:

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- (a) its siting, design, materials, scale and landscaping are sympathetic with the particular landscape quality and character of the AGLV, and
- (b) there would be no unacceptable damage to those built and natural features, including important trees and hedgerows, that contribute positively to the landscape quality and character of the area.

Green Belt



6.92. The South East Dorset Green Belt was established by the 1980 South East Dorset Structure Plan following recognition that the growth of settlements in South East Dorset had resulted in the distinction between urban and rural areas becoming blurred and had spread the influence of urban development into the surrounding countryside. The Green Belt was defined as extending 5 to 8 miles outwards from the edge of the built up area of the main conurbation. Existing urban areas within this zone together with areas identified for development by the Structure Plan were excluded from the Green Belt. The Bournemouth, Dorset and Poole Structure Plan reaffirms the extent of the Green Belt in Settlement Policy D.

6.93. The Green Belt forms part of the countryside and the policies contained in this section are in addition to those general policies for the countryside set out in the preceding sections. Some parts of the Green Belt also fall within areas of landscape importance including both the AONB and the AGLVs. The policies for landscape protection for these areas continue to apply where they overlap with the Green Belt.

6.94. A large proportion of the Green Belt has been defined within earlier local plans, including the Corfe Mullen (1985), Wimborne & Colehill (1984), Ferndown etc (1989) and Verwood etc (1999) Local Plans. This Plan has reviewed these boundaries and defined new boundaries in those areas not covered by an adopted local plan. A number of significant changes are included within this Plan. The following involve the removal of small areas of land from the Green Belt:

- Woolsbridge Industrial Estate (part): this lies within West Moors Parish: the adjoining area of the Estate in Verwood Parish is already excluded from the Green Belt and this change is made for consistency
- Land at Ferndown Upper, Middle and County Schools, Beaucroft School, Colehill, St Michael's Middle School, Colehill, Allenbourn Middle School, Wimborne. The built area of these schools has been excluded as they are urban in character, so do not provide openness in the context of PPG2, and they are directly related to the urban areas
- Land at No 227 Wimborne Road West at Stapehill.

The following involves the inclusion of land within the Green Belt:

- Land at Beacon Hill Brickworks was excluded from the Green Belt in the Corfe Mullen Local Plan in order to encourage redevelopment for employment, which could help to bring about heathland restoration. Restoration is now expected to take place following the grant of planning permission for landfill with waste at the Brickworks. The site is therefore shown to be within the Green Belt.

6.95. Policy GB1

The area covered by the Green Belt policies is defined on the Proposals Map.

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- 6.96. The purposes of including land within Green Belts are set out in national policy advice (PPG 2).⁶² They are:
- (i) to check the unrestricted sprawl of large built-up areas;
 - (ii) to prevent neighbouring towns from merging into one another;
 - (iii) to assist in safeguarding the countryside from encroachment;
 - (iv) to preserve the setting and special character of historic towns; and
 - (v) to assist in urban regeneration, by encouraging the recycling of derelict and other urban land.⁶³

The key attribute of the Green Belt is the openness of the land⁶⁴ and it is this which the Green Belt policy seeks to protect. Within Green Belt areas there is a presumption against all but a few, limited forms of development and particularly against most new building. The following policy is based on national policy advice.

6.97. Policy GB2

Within the Green Belt inappropriate development, including uses of land, will not be permitted. Inappropriate development will include any development which does not maintain the openness of the land or which conflicts with the purposes of including land within the Green Belt, and new buildings except for:

- (a) **agriculture or forestry;**
- (b) **essential facilities for outdoor sport and outdoor recreation or cemeteries and for other uses which preserve the openness of the Green Belt and which do not conflict with the purposes of including the land within it;**
- (c) **the limited extension or alteration of existing dwellings or their replacement where the new dwelling is not materially larger than that which it replaces; and**
- (d) **infilling within the village infilling policy boundaries of washed over villages.**

- 6.98. While this policy provides the overall framework for the control of development within the Green Belt, more specific policies are necessary to provide a greater degree of clarity and certainty on what development proposals will be acceptable under (c) and (d). Policies for development under (c) follow. Policies for envelopes for those parts of villages where the infilling under (d) will be permitted are set out later in this Chapter (Policy GB7 para. 6.112).

Extensions and Replacement Dwellings in the Green Belt

- 6.99. The following policy provides a framework for considering proposals to extend or replace existing dwellings. It would clearly be contrary to the purpose of the Green Belt to allow a succession of 'limited' extensions which would cumulatively form substantial extensions to an existing dwelling.
- 6.100. Government advice and the general policy towards development in the Green Belt which is set out above now permit 'limited' but not 'disproportionate' extensions to existing dwellings. Policy towards replacement dwellings under national policy advice is that the new dwelling may not be 'materially' larger than that which it replaces.

⁶² Planning Policy Guidance Note 2 (1995), para 1.5

⁶³ Planning Policy Guidance Note 2 (1995), para 1.6

⁶⁴ Planning Policy Guidance Note 2 (1995), para 1.4

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- 6.101. Over the past decade, when extensions of up to 50% of the floor area of existing dwellings have been permitted, experience has shown that there can be a substantial impact and change of character both in the individual case and cumulatively. This has been contrary to the essential purpose of Green Belt policy, that the land should remain open and rural in character. The impact has been particularly noticeable in the case of replacement dwellings where almost invariably the height and bulk of the new building has been substantially greater than the building it replaced.
- 6.102. Prior to the Inspector's Report the Council was using the 50% principle set out in the above paragraph as a policy determining whether an extension and replacement were disproportionately large in relation to the openness of the Green Belt. The Council will determine such applications on the basis of the policy set out below judging proposals on whether their impact is proportionate or disproportionate in terms of the openness of the Green Belt and will only use as a general guideline whether the extension is greater than 50% or 140sqm of the gross residential floor area of the dwelling as it existed when the Green Belt was designated on 5th February 1980. The figure of 140sqm represents the size of dwelling that the Council considers can reasonably provide for modern standards of living.
- 6.103. It has been the case in the past that large garages have been developed embodying 'storage' space above which has later been converted to habitable rooms. This form of covert extension would not be acceptable and is guarded against by the policy. Basements and roof extensions will be treated on their merits depending on their impact on the open character of the area. Conservatories, although of lighter construction than most conventional buildings, are a common means of providing additional habitable rooms and will be treated under the same policies as other forms of house extension where they adjoin the house and are directly accessible from within it.

6.104. Policy GB3

Within the Green Belt, extensions to or replacements of existing dwellings will only be allowed where:

- (a) the extension or the replacement dwelling does not materially change the impact of the dwelling on the openness of the green belt, especially through its height or bulk; and**
- (b) the size and scale of a proposed extension does not dominate the existing dwelling; and**
- (c) the size of any garage building must be commensurate with the replaced or extended property. Any space above ground floor should be limited solely to storage use. Such space should not be capable of later conversion to residential use.**

Re-use of Existing Buildings in the Green Belt

- 6.105. Policies towards the re-use and conversion of existing buildings are included among the general policies for the countryside earlier in this Chapter. The policies give priority to re-use for employment purposes over conversions to residential use. These policies will apply within the Green Belt as in other open countryside areas, and the re-use of buildings in the Green Belt is not in itself inappropriate development. However national policy advice and the need to protect the essential openness of Green Belt land leads to the need for some additional policies. The purpose of these is to provide protection for the open character of the land in an area which, by definition, is one of high pressure for development. The policy covers not only the re-use of an existing building but the question of its extension and of the use of the surrounding land, for example for storage, parking or as garden land where the new use is for housing.

6.106. Policy GB4

The re-use of buildings within the Green Belt will be considered to be appropriate development where, in addition to meeting the requirements of Policy GB2 (para 6.97), this does not have a materially greater impact than the present use on the openness of the Green Belt and the purposes of including land in it. Extensions of re-used buildings and any associated uses of land surrounding the building, will only be permitted where they do not conflict with the openness of the Green Belt and the purposes of including land in it.

- 6.107. As the construction of farm buildings may frequently take place under permitted development rights without direct control by the Local Planning Authority, it would be possible under these policies for new buildings to be constructed and then changed to other uses, or the uses of existing buildings be transferred into new ones, so achieving non-agricultural development in the Green Belt which would not otherwise have been permitted. To guard against this, the following policies will be applied.

6.108. Policy GB5

To avoid abuse of permitted development rights, the re-use of agricultural buildings in the green belt will not be permitted where:

- (a) they were constructed under permitted development rights; or
- (b) any agricultural use for which they were appropriate has been accommodated in a building constructed under permitted development rights; and
- (c) in either case the new buildings were substantially completed less than four years previously without any clear agricultural justification for their original construction.

6.109. Policy GB6

To avoid abuse of permitted development rights, permission for the re-use of an agricultural building in the green belt may be subject to a planning condition or legal agreement withdrawing permitted development rights for further new agricultural buildings within the same group or in the vicinity of the re-used building where:

- (a) the new buildings could be required to accommodate any uses capable of being housed by the building which it is proposed should be re-used; and
- (b) any new buildings could have a seriously detrimental effect on the openness of the Green Belt or be damaging to its visual amenity.

Infilling and the Green Belt

- 6.110. There are a wide range of settlements within the Green Belt in East Dorset, from towns or suburbs, through substantial villages to smaller hamlets and individual farms. Because of the character and historical development of the south of the District, many parts of the countryside have a scatter of dwellings extending over a wide range area and many of the villages are surrounded by similar scattered housing. These areas form part of the general open countryside covered by the Green Belt and are unsuitable for further infill development which, if allowed, could be extensive and contrary to the fundamental aim of Green Belt policy of maintaining the openness of the area.

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- 6.111. Within the general extent of the East Dorset Green Belt there are three forms of settlement, in terms of the planning policy approach to be applied. These are considered as follows:

Settlements inset within the Green Belt

These settlements are not constrained by Green Belt policy. New development is, in principle, acceptable within these areas, subject to other policies within this Plan. These settlement areas have been identified on the basis that they are urban in character. The boundaries have been defined using the guidance within PPG2, paragraphs 2.6 to 2.10. The settlements where this approach applies are:

Colehill
Corfe Mullen
Ferndown
Gundry Moor Industrial Estate
Queen Elizabeth School / The Broads
St Leonards and St Ives
Stapehill
Sturminster Marshall
Three Legged Cross
Uddens and Ferndown Industrial Estates
Verwood
West Moors
Wimborne
Woolsbridge Industrial Estate

Village Infill Settlements

These settlements are washed over by the Green Belt designation. However, because they are characterised by a cohesive built character and have basic facilities, they are considered suitable for limited infilling. A 'Village Infill Envelope' is defined on the Proposals Map showing where Policy GB7 applies. These envelopes have been defined at the following locations:

Furzehill
Gaunts Common
Hinton Martell
Holt
Horton
Longham
Shapwick
Whitmore
Woodlands

6.112. Policy GB7

Infill development will be allowed under Policy GB2 (d) (para 6.97). Such development should be contained wholly within the Village Infill Envelopes, and should be of a scale and character that respects the existing village form.

Washed Over Settlements

These settlements are washed over by the Green Belt. They are considered to be unsuitable for any infill development under Policy GB2 (d) and do not have Village Infill Envelopes. Such development would cause harm to the openness of the Green Belt in these locations or would be contrary to the principles of sustainable development.

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Major Developed Sites

- 6.113. Annex C to Planning Policy Guidance Note 2 gives particular advice on the future of major developed sites in the Green Belt. Illustrations given of the types of site intended to be covered by this advice are factories, collieries, power stations, water and sewage treatment works, military establishments, civil airfields, hospitals and research and education establishments. Within such sites, infilling or redevelopment which meets a number of additional criteria is not considered to be development inappropriate in the Green Belt
- 6.114. Following a review of the existing developed sites in the area of the Green Belt, only the St. Leonards Hospital site has been identified as sufficiently large in scale and in terms of the density of buildings or structures on the site to fall within the range of this policy advice. In view of the particular circumstances of this site, a specific policy towards its future has been included in the local area Chapter of the Plan dealing with St. Leonards and St. Ives.
- 6.115. The Sheiling School at Ashley and Sturts Farm Community in West Moors, offer nationally important services to the community through their charitable work with children and adults suffering from learning disabilities. These establishments lie within the Green Belt and further development to improve facilities would therefore be inappropriate and contrary to Green Belt policy. However, the Council acknowledges that the work of the School and Community are of national importance. Proposals for development that are demonstrably necessary to support this work are therefore likely to be supported by the Council.
- 6.116. When considering development at these sites evidence will need to be provided that alternative suitable premises do not exist and that the proposals are not excessive in terms of scale required for the intended function. Extensions, or replacement buildings are to be preferred to construction on greenfield plots, in order to contain the spread of urban features within the green belt.
- 6.117. Two further schools lie within the Green Belt at Dumpton School, Colehill and Castle Court School, Corfe Mullen. These are private schools and do not undertake work of national importance, in contrast to Sheiling School and Sturts Farm. It is therefore unlikely that the Council will support further development beyond that already approved, or which is the subject of permitted development rights.

Built Environment

Conservation Areas

- 6.118. Conservation Areas are “areas of special architectural or historic interest, the character or appearance of which it is desirable to preserve or enhance.” They are designated under a separate process to that under which the Local Plan is prepared. However, existing Conservation Areas are shown on the Local Plan Proposals Map. Detailed Conservation Area statements, setting out an analysis of the character and special qualities of each Area are published separately and will be taken into account as Supplementary Planning Guidance in considering planning applications and applications for Conservation Area consent. Intending developers should refer to these statements for guidance on those elements and characteristics which must be respected by developments or other works requiring consent. The Planning Authority will undertake enhancement schemes in Conservation Areas where circumstances allow, and will encourage individual initiatives.
- 6.119. The number and extent of Conservation Areas in the District have been comprehensively reviewed during the preparation of the Local Plan. However, it is possible, although unlikely, that some further Conservation Areas might be proposed

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during the life of the Plan or the boundaries of existing Conservation Areas be reviewed.

- 6.120. *New Conservation Areas will only be proposed where:*
- (a) *the area has a distinctive and coherent character as a whole; and*
 - (b) *there is a significant historic, archæological, æsthetic or architectural interest not limited to individual buildings or features; and*
 - (c) *there is a need to ensure the preservation and enhancement of the area, which may be threatened by inappropriate development, neglect or lack of management.*
- 6.121. Conservation Areas may also include open spaces and, in some instances, adjoining open land where this forms an essential part of the character of the area.
- 6.122. Conservation Area boundaries will be reviewed where the above factors have ceased to apply.
- 6.123. In order to protect the character of the District's Conservation Areas, new development within them must be carefully designed and must take particular account of its surroundings. In considering proposals for development within Conservation Areas, the form, bulk, scale, materials, levels, design in terms of architectural detailing, relationship to neighbouring buildings, impact upon the historic street and building patterns and open spaces such as squares or gardens, trees, landscaping and other features that contribute positively to the special character of the area, will be particularly important. Information showing how these matters have been addressed by the development proposal may be necessary to allow the Planning Authority to determine a planning application.
- 6.124. Within Conservation Areas control over development is generally more stringent than elsewhere. Some forms of development which elsewhere are 'permitted development' under the General Development Order require specific planning permission. Other works, such as demolition, may require a 'conservation area consent' separate from planning permission, and this may be required even when planning permission is not needed. Many buildings within Conservation Areas are also 'listed' as being of architectural or historic interest. Works to these may require 'listed building consent' in addition to planning permission, and this may also be required for works such as internal changes where planning permission may not be needed. Advice on when these consents are needed may be freely obtained from the Planning Authority.
- 6.125. Policy BUCON1**
- Planning permission will not be given for development within or adjacent to a Conservation Area which does not preserve or enhance its character or appearance.**
- 6.126. There is a general presumption in favour of retaining buildings which make a positive contribution to the character or appearance of a Conservation Area. The first of the two following policies sets out the criteria for decisions on applications for permission to demolish. Even where the building is unimportant or the criteria of the policy are met, demolition of buildings in Conservation Areas may lead to the creation of 'gap sites' which can remain vacant for long periods before redevelopment takes place, damaging the appearance of the area.⁶⁵ It is therefore important that consent should not be given for demolition unless it is clear that the site will be redeveloped in a way which will preserve or enhance the character of the area. This is covered in the second of the two following policies. The Planning Authority will take the same approach where Conservation Area consent rather than planning permission is required.

⁶⁵ Planning Policy Guidance Note 15 (1994), para 4.29

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6.127. Policy BUCON2

Where a building makes a positive contribution to the character, appearance or architectural and historic interest of a Conservation Area, permission will not be granted which would facilitate its demolition.

6.128. Policy BUCON3

Permission will not be granted for demolition within a Conservation Area unless it will in itself, or through subsequent redevelopment of the site, preserve or enhance the character, appearance, architectural or historic interest of the area. Where ugly gaps would be created as a result of demolition far in advance of redevelopment, demolition for redevelopment will not be permitted unless detailed proposals for the replacement development have been approved by the Local Planning Authority and agreements made to ensure that the replacement works will be carried out within a specified time scale.

- 6.129. In many Conservation Areas, services are provided by overhead wires which are among their most intrusive and unsightly features. Where possible the Planning Authority will encourage the undergrounding of existing services. On new developments there is normally no reason why services should not be supplied underground and this practice is entirely normal in larger developments both within Conservation Areas and elsewhere, for example on new housing estates. Conditions will be imposed on planning permissions for new developments or redevelopments in Conservation Areas such as new buildings to require services to be underground. However, this will not be appropriate for most minor developments such as alterations or house extensions. General policies towards overhead services outside Conservation Areas are set out in Policy TEDEV3 (para 6.264).

6.130. Policy BUCON4

On new developments or re-developments in Conservation Areas, services provided at the time of development will be sited underground where practicable.

- 6.131. Policies for advertisements, shopfronts and blinds in Conservation Areas are included in the section dealing with these types of development (see paras 6.148 to 6.157).

Historic Parks and Gardens

- 6.132. The District contains a small number of sites identified in English Heritage's Register of Parks and Gardens of Special Historic Interest. It is national policy that these should be protected.

6.133. Policy BUCON5

Parks and Gardens registered as of Special Historic Interest will be protected. Development will not be permitted which would adversely affect their special interest.

Special Character Areas

- 6.134. In addition to the designated Conservation Areas, there are other parts of some towns and villages which are important for their character and the contribution which they make to the local environment. These may be areas of older development, areas with a particular character of buildings or layout, or areas where trees and bushes are particularly important in creating a sylvan character. Although they are not of sufficient historic or architectural interest for designation as Conservation Areas, and the

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individual buildings may be undistinguished, it is important that they should be protected because of their intrinsic quality and their local importance, although this protection will be less comprehensive than that given to the Conservation Areas themselves. For example, there is no presumption against redevelopment, so long as it respects those features and characteristics which are important for the quality of the area.

- 6.135. The areas are identified on the Proposals Map, and their defining characteristics are described in separate statements which are available as Supplementary planning Guidance. Within them, the following policy will be applied.

6.136. Policy BUCON6

In the Special Character Areas defined on the proposals maps and insets, development or redevelopment must respect those features or characteristics which are key to maintaining the environmental quality of the area.

Historic Buildings

- 6.137. The law provides for separate controls for 'listed buildings', and as a result 'Listed Building Consent' is almost always required in addition to planning permission where development is proposed affecting them, and may also be required when planning permission is not needed, for example in some works to change the interior of a building. The policies which follow apply to development under the planning acts, and not to the separate Listed Building Consent procedure. Listed buildings are defined nationally and not by the Local Planning Authority, although a copy of the list is held by the Planning Authority and may be inspected at its offices. 'Listing' applies to the whole building and its curtilage including any objects or structures attached to it. This includes internal features as well those which affect its outward appearance.

Demolition

- 6.138. Listed buildings are irreplaceable and can be damaged by insensitive alterations as easily as by outright demolition. National policy guidance gives a strong presumption against any demolition and in favour of preserving listed buildings⁶⁶. For this reason, Listed Building Consent is rarely given for demolitions. The following policies will apply to development which requires planning permission and would generally lead to accord between a decision on a planning application and the decision on any parallel application for Listed Building Consent.

6.139. Policy BUCON7

Planning permission will not be granted which could require the demolition of a listed building unless:

- (a) all reasonable efforts have been made to sustain existing uses or find sympathetic, viable new uses and have failed; and**
- (b) preservation in some other ownership would not be suitable or possible; or**
- (c) its redevelopment would produce substantial benefits for the community which would decisively outweigh the loss of the building, and where agreements are made to secure that the approved redevelopment scheme will be carried out within a specified time scale.**

⁶⁶ Planning Policy Guidance Note 15 (1994), para 3.3

Alterations, Extensions and Changes of Use

- 6.140. The following policy deals with developments which would damage a listed building or its setting. This would include development, including changes of use, which would give rise to access requirements, car parking or other site works inappropriate to the character and appearance of the building or its setting. It is important that planning policies should ensure the right circumstances and surroundings for listed buildings to remain well-used and cared for by their owners, as well as protecting against direct damage. The Planning Authority will continue to offer advice on the repair or alteration of Listed Buildings.
- 6.141. Alterations and extensions to listed buildings occur from time to time, particularly when they are adapted to a new use. These can be entirely acceptable where the integrity of the original building is retained and the new works are carried out sensitively and to a high standard. However, particular problems have arisen in recent years with proposals for the replacement of original doors, windows and other features with those constructed of non-traditional materials or of a non-traditional design. These are often features of importance in the building and will be protected. In addition it is important that the original plan form, roof construction and interior features should be retained.
- 6.142. Extensions and other development within the curtilage of a 'listed' building may also occur. In this case, the balance of advantage, for example in terms of retaining the building in economically viable use, will be set against the change to the interest and setting of the building. Proposals will need to be supported by a clear justification, and alternative and less damaging alternatives should be considered. Extensions should not dominate the original building in terms of scale, materials or location and will require sensitive handling of detail. Extensions may not be acceptable for some buildings at all.

6.143. Policy BUCON8

Development that would adversely affect the architectural or historic interest of a listed building or its setting will not be permitted.

- 6.144. Because historic buildings are unique and irreplaceable, under certain circumstances it may be desirable to allow a 'listed' building to be given a new use which would conflict with other policies, where this would lead to its long term preservation. The following policy sets out the criteria that will be considered in deciding such cases.

6.145. Policy BUCON9

Where a proposed change of use of a listed building conflicts with other policies, it will be permitted where:

- (a) the existing use or alternative uses which accord with other policies are not expected to secure the preservation of the building or specific features of architectural or historic importance; and**
- (b) there is evidence that the proposed use will do so; and**
- (c) the proposed use will be sympathetic to the fabric of the building; and**
- (d) the community benefit of retaining the building or features of architectural or historic interest outweighs the damage to other policy objectives.**

Unlisted Traditional Buildings

- 6.146. In recent years there has been considerable pressure for the redevelopment of traditional buildings, outside Conservation Areas, and their replacement with larger modern buildings. Those lost include particularly the modest rural cottages built of traditional materials, including cob and thatch, and Victorian brick cottages and farm buildings. While they are not of sufficient quality from an architectural or national historic standpoint to merit inclusion in the statutory national list, and are scattered too widely to be included within Conservation Areas, they are nevertheless an irreplaceable element of the local scene and a key factor in the landscape and in creating a sense of local character and distinctiveness. While in many cases planning consent will not be required for demolition or other works, the Planning Authority will seek to encourage their retention, repair and restoration.

Section 2 Policies Relating to Particular Types of Development

- 6.147. Within this second section of Chapter 6 are the policies specifically for particular types of development. Within the section the different types of development are dealt with in alphabetical order.

Advertisements and Shopfronts

Advertisements General

- 6.148. Inappropriate advertisements can be damaging to both individual buildings and to the wider local area. The number of signs on any one site must be limited, and the opportunity will be taken when new signs are introduced of reducing visual clutter. In order to minimise the number of estate agents' boards on residential properties, the Local Planning Authority has issued Supplementary Planning Guidance clarifying government regulations.

6.149. Policy ADSDEV1

In the interests of amenity, the design, size, materials, illumination, colour, and number of advertisements, blinds or canopies must respect the character of both the building and site to which it relates and of the local area. In addition to matters of visual amenity, advertisements which cause danger to public safety will not be permitted.

Advertisements in Conservation Areas

- 6.150. In addition to the general policy on advertisements, the following policies will apply within Conservation Areas where particular care is needed to ensure advertisements do not damage their character, with a resulting loss of amenity. In these areas, advertisements using traditional materials, principally painted wooden fascia and sign boards, should generally be used, as these will provide continuity with the established forms in the area. Other materials and forms of signage, however, may also be acceptable. Advertisements attached to 'listed' buildings, or which will affect their setting, will need to be considered taking account of the policies for the protection of these, which are set out earlier in this Chapter, and are also likely to require Listed Building Consent.

- 6.151. The policy sets as a general criterion that the advertisements, which may form part of a shopfront as well as separate signs, should not conflict with the general objective that the character and appearance of the Conservation Area should be preserved or enhanced. There have been particular problems in recent years with continental-style canopies and fixed blinds, commonly on buildings used for shops or commerce. These are inevitably prominent, particularly when made from glossy or highly coloured materials and, being entirely alien to the traditional street scene, are not suitable for use in Conservation Areas. Similar considerations arise with internally illuminated signs or shop fascia. However, externally illuminated signs will be acceptable where they do not damage the visual amenity of the Conservation Area.

6.152. Policy ADSDEV2

In Conservation Areas, advertisements should not conflict with the preservation or enhancement of the area.

Shopfronts and Security Shutters on Shops and Commercial Premises

6.153. The centre of every historic town and village has its own unique character which shopfronts play an important part in establishing. The Local Planning Authority will endeavour, through control of development and design advice, to improve the standard of shopfronts in the Conservation Areas in particular. Where the building involved is 'listed', the introduction of a new shopfront or changes to an existing one will almost always require Listed Building Consent. Because of the historic and architectural interest of these areas it will be essential that shopfronts should not conflict with the style or period of the building, weakening its character and its contribution to the area as a whole. Equally the quality of the design must be high: poorly proportioned shopfronts, for example, will detract from the visual quality of the area. Large expanses of undivided glass are a feature of modern shopfronts, and conflict with the historic character of these areas, as well as reducing the interest of the building in order to let the displayed goods predominate.

6.154. Policy ADSDEV3

Proposals for new or replacement shopfronts in Conservation Areas must:

- (a) respect the period and style of the building and relate to it as a whole; and**
- (b) include historically accurate detailing where the proposal is of traditional character; and**
- (c) retain any features of architectural or historic interest.**

6.155. Security grilles and shutters have become an increasingly prominent feature of town centres in recent years. These add to individual security but may increase the sense of danger and encourage expectation of crime in other users of a shopping centre. They can be highly intrusive and damaging to the appearance of the area. Internal lattice grilles are the least damaging, permitting the vitality given to the street by window displays and lighting to remain. Perforated or slotted internal shutters and lattice gates in recessed doorways have a rather greater impact. However, it is external grilles or shutters which have the greatest effect on the street scene. Again, perforated or slotted shutters are less damaging than solid shutters, which contribute the most strongly to a fortress atmosphere. Even when shutters are open, exposed runners and housing boxes are obtrusive and serve as a reminder of insecurity. The impact of shutters or grilles may be reduced by their concealment and by use of colour. Unpainted metal surfaces on shutters and housings will seldom be acceptable.

6.156. Planning permission will normally be required for external grilles and shutters, and listed building consent for those on listed buildings, even where they are wholly internal. Whether shutters and grilles are acceptable will depend on the balance between their impact on the individual building and the local area, and the need for security. Within Conservation Areas in particular, the visual impact will be critical. Proposals for listed buildings will be considered in the light of the policies towards listed buildings set out elsewhere in this Chapter, and will take into account the need to protect the historic interest and architectural character of the building.

6.157. Policy ADSDEV4

External security grilles and shutters will be permitted where:

- (a) the need for security outweighs the impact on the individual building, the local area and the vitality of the shopping centre; and**

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- (b) **security cannot be provided by the use of internal grilles or shutters or by alternative and more acceptable means.**

Perforated shutters or grilles should be used except where these would provide inadequate security and the additional impact of solid shutters is acceptable. Measures should be taken to minimise the visual impact of the shutters or grilles, including painting and, where possible, the concealment of housings.

Housing

6.158. Specific proposals for new housing developments are made in the sections of the Plan dealing with individual areas. The general development strategy of the Plan, including housing, is set out in Chapter 5, together with an explanation of the expected level of development in various locations and from allocated and windfall sites. This section contains general policies which will be applied to housing development proposals generally. The form, scale and design of such development will have to take account other General Policies within this Plan, which consider matters of detail.

- i) **Housing Infill Development within Urban Areas**

The urban areas within the Local Plan are all located within the southern part of the District and are all contained by Green Belt policy. A list of these settlements is provided in the section on 'Infilling and the Green Belt' in paragraphs 6.110 – 6.112. Housing infill development within the urban areas can take many forms. For instance, it could be implemented through the amalgamation of large gardens, or through the redevelopment of other uses such as employment land.

- ii) **Housing Infill Development within Key Rural Settlements**

The three key rural settlements of Alderholt, Cranborne, and Sixpenny Handley have defined Village Infill Envelopes, while the fourth - Sturminster Marshall – is inset within and contained by Green Belt policy. Housing infill development will be appropriate within these boundaries.

- iii) **Housing Infill Development within Villages**

The following villages have defined Village Infill Envelopes :

Furzehill*
Gaunts Common*
Gussage All Saints
Gussage St Michael
Hinton Martell*
Holt*
Horton*
Longham*
Shapwick*
Whitmore*
Woodlands*

Those villages which are washed over by Green Belt policy are marked with an asterisk. Housing infill development is acceptable where it is contained wholly within the Village Infill Envelopes, is of a character appropriate to these small rural villages and respects existing village forms. Usually this will mean that development will be limited to infilling of gaps in otherwise built-up frontages.

6.159. Policy HODEV1

The development or the redevelopment of land for housing will be permitted on sites within the existing urban areas and village policy envelopes as defined on the Proposals Map, provided that its location and form are appropriate to the physical and visual character of the settlement.

Form of Development

- 6.160. Housing development may take several forms: conventional houses and bungalows, flats, or specialised accommodation, of which the most common form is housing for the elderly. Specific policies apply to some of these forms of development.
- 6.161. Planning Policy Guidance from central government now recognises the importance of concentrating further housing in urban areas in order to achieve more sustainable patterns of development, and the contribution which this can make to housing provision.⁶⁷ It is important that the best use of land is secured when opportunities for new housing arise. Such an approach can help to minimise the need for new green-field sites and protect the important countryside and wildlife habitats around the edges of settlements, as well as to secure new homes.
- 6.162. At the same time it is essential that the quality of the environment of towns and villages is maintained and improved to make them attractive places to live. There is a need to retain existing trees, shrubs and urban green spaces while developments should create attractive places which meet the needs of people, respect local character, contribute to public health and safety and in which people rather than motor vehicles are dominant.

6.163. Policy HODEV2

New housing will be permitted in urban areas and within Village Infill Envelopes where the proposals:

- (a) make the best use of the available land with higher densities particularly in town centres and places with good public transport accessibility;**
- (b) provide an appropriate range of dwelling sizes and types;**
- (c) retain existing green spaces and recreational open spaces, trees and shrubs, and provide for landscaping as an integral part of the development;**
- (d) create places and spaces which are attractive and respect and enhance local character;**
- (e) promote designs and layouts which are safe and take account of public health, crime prevention and community safety**
- (e) give priority to pedestrians over the movement and parking of vehicles**
- (f) promote energy efficiency**
- (g) include surface water run-off attenuation measures where appropriate as an integral part of the development.**

Elderly Persons' Accommodation, Rest and Nursing Homes

- 6.164. In addition to conventional housing, other forms of housing development may take place within existing urban areas. Among the most common in East Dorset, with its high population of retired people, is specialist accommodation for the elderly.
- 6.165. This type of development is valuable in meeting a growing need among the local population, and provides an important supply of new, specialised accommodation within the existing urban areas.

⁶⁷ Planning Policy Guidance Note 3 (2000), para 1

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- 6.166. As well as new, purpose built accommodation, the development often takes the form of the conversion and extension of existing buildings. Problems commonly arise where the scale of the proposed development is too great for the existing building or site to accommodate comfortably. These problems may stem from the scale of the extensions needed in the case of a conversion or from the bulk of a new building, which may in either case damage the character of the local housing area; or the building may overlook or overshadow neighbouring properties; or the coverage of buildings and parking on the plot may preclude adequate sitting out space or landscaping; or parking and servicing areas themselves may cause disturbance through their proximity to adjoining dwellings. The policies provide that such factors are specifically taken into account in considering applications.

6.167. Policy HODEV3

Infilling within urban areas and Village Infill envelopes defined on the Proposals Map by development or redevelopment of sites, including the conversion or extension of existing buildings, for elderly persons' accommodation, rest homes, nursing homes and other similar communal establishments, will be permitted where:

- (a) **it is not of such a scale as to create a building whose bulk or site coverage is damaging to the amenity of neighbouring residents or the character of the local area; and**
- (b) **it will not adversely affect the amenity of neighbouring residents through loss of light, privacy, or overlooking; and**
- (c) **it will provide adequate external amenity space for its residents, away from vehicle parking or manoeuvring areas and main road frontages; and**
- (d) **vehicle parking or manoeuvring areas do not cause unacceptable noise or disturbance to neighbouring residents or loss of amenity by their proximity to ground floor windows either of the development or of adjoining properties.**

Policy on 'Granny Annexes'

- 6.168. A further type of housing for which permission is commonly sought is known as the 'granny annexe', although these may be for a wide range of relatives. They are usually designed to be partly self-contained and in many cases are in places where a wholly separate dwelling would not be permitted. Therefore, in order that these developments can be allowed, it is necessary to ensure by design and, where necessary by planning condition, that when the original need ceases they will become part of the original house, rather than becoming a separate dwelling. As they are a type of extension, it is also necessary to ensure that a permanent extension of that scale is acceptable, judged against the other policies of the Plan. The following policy will therefore be applied. This form of development will be acceptable in principle throughout the Plan area.

6.169. Policy HODEV4

Extensions to existing dwellings to provide semi-self contained accommodation (granny annexes) will be permitted where a separate dwelling would not be acceptable and where:

- (a) **an extension of that scale would be acceptable under other planning policies; and**
- (b) **its dependence on the existing dwelling is established by physical arrangements and, where necessary, planning condition; and**

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- (c) **its incorporation as part of the existing dwelling when no longer needed for its original purpose is secured.**

Accessibility

- 6.170. Policy on accessibility for the disabled for housing and for other development will be found in Section 3 of this Chapter (see para. 6.283 et seq.).

Affordable Housing

- 6.171. Affordable housing is defined as being:

Housing affordable to households in unsuitable accommodation and who cannot afford market housing including both subsidised and market housing designed for those whose incomes deny them the opportunity to purchase houses on the open market, as a result of the local relationship between income and market price. This 'local relationship' can be elaborated as follows:

'A dwelling is defined as "affordable housing" where it has the smallest number of rooms appropriate to alleviate the needs of a household which cannot afford to pay – without some form of subsidy – an amount on that property equivalent to a 5% deposit of dwelling price, or renting taking up 35% of net household income.'

- 6.172. The above formula is based on typical lending formula for mortgages and DETR maximum rental levels. It does not imply regulation of housing association rents and is entirely neutral of tenure, as any tenure falling below the definition will be regarded as affordable. Nevertheless, it would appear that in most instances in East Dorset the promotion of subsidised rented housing will be necessary to satisfy these requirements. Shared ownership housing will, however, have a valuable supporting role to play. The involvement of a registered social landlord will be regarded as sufficient to ensure that the housing is 'affordable' and will remain so in the long term.
- 6.173. East Dorset is a relatively prosperous District with high levels of owner occupation and high land and property values. The high price of properties is derived from the attractive local environment and the proximity to the South East Dorset conurbation. Those people on low incomes therefore find it hard to afford to rent or buy on the open housing market. This coupled with the low stock of existing affordable housing means that there is a need for such housing to be provided within the District over the Plan period. The need for affordable housing within the District can be demonstrated by the following key facts:

House Prices

- Average House Price in the District in December 2000 was £156,972 (Land Registry). This is the highest level within Dorset, and adjoining Districts. It is also 47% above the national average.
- Between 1996 and the end of 2000 there was a 73% increase in house prices within Dorset. As of 2000 the County was ranked the 12th most expensive in the UK. In 1996 it was the 16th.
- Only 6% of properties in the District are in a Council Tax value band below £40,000 (2,000 homes).

Earnings

- In the year 2000 it was estimated that 68% of households within East Dorset had incomes of less than £20,000. Approximately 40% of households earned less than £10,000 (Source: CACI).

Affordable Housing Supply

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- 85% of households in the District were owner occupiers in 1991 (Census). This is the sixth highest in England.
- Social rented housing totalled 8% in 1991.
- Private rented sector totalled 7% in 1991.
- Provision of housing completions over the four Year Period 1994-1998 (based on the beginning of the Local Plan Period).

	All	Housing Association		Private	
	No.	No.	%	No.	%
E Dorset	2,174	230	11	1,944	89
Dorset	11,576	2,076	18	9,500	82

- Between 1994 and 2000, 137 social dwellings have been bought as part of the right to buy policy.

Applicants for Social Housing

- As of 31st March 2001 there were 1,869 applicants on the Common Housing Register (over 40% were families with children).
- 6.174. The Council will continue to monitor house prices, stock, tenure and housing need. A housing needs survey for the District is to be undertaken before the end of 2002. The Local Planning Authority will take into account the level of need for affordable housing that is current when carrying out discussions with prospective housing developers over the type and form of development proposed, and will seek the inclusion of an element of affordable housing in larger, new development schemes.
- 6.175. On the basis of the above facts the need for affordable housing in the District is substantial. Government advice enables councils to set an overall target for affordable housing over the Plan period, in order to meet such a need. However, potential supply of newly built affordable dwellings in the District is very limited. As of 1st April 2000, 3,528 of the 4,400 strategic dwelling requirement had either been built, or had planning permission and were expected to be built. Additionally, 421 dwellings are allocated in the Local Plan without planning permissions as of 1st April 2000.
- 6.176. It is expected that approximately 100 affordable dwellings will be provided as part of the outstanding allocations without planning permissions. Additionally, there are about 110 affordable dwellings that are either currently being built, or are known and are likely to receive planning permission. This means that the total number of affordable dwellings completed so far in the Plan period and known as likely to come forward amounts to about 450. Nevertheless, it is clear that the substantial need for affordable housing cannot be satisfied through construction of new dwellings, although it will be a major source. There are only 538 dwellings to be identified in order to meet the overall Structure Plan housing requirement. However, it is anticipated that the Structure Plan requirement will be exceeded and that there are estimated to be 1,097 dwellings presently unidentified likely to be built before the end of the Plan period. However, to satisfy affordable housing need a large proportion of this figure, if not all, would be required to be new affordable dwellings. It would, however, be unrealistic to expect the majority of uncommitted new dwellings to be affordable. A large proportion of new dwellings are built on windfall sites that are smaller than the thresholds set out within the following policy.
- 6.177. Additionally, East Dorset is heavily constrained by national planning policies (i.e. Green Belt, wildlife designations and AONB). The strategic policy embodied within the adopted Structure Plan is one of constraint with development contained within the settlements.

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6.178. The Local Plan therefore seeks to adopt a realistic target for the provision of affordable housing, taking into account the significant planning constraints to new development. The target for the whole Plan period is 640 dwellings, to be obtained as follows:

1994 to 2000	230 completed
2000 to 2011	100 on allocated sites
	110 on other known sites
	200 on unidentified windfall sites
Total	640 dwellings

6.179. The strict national and strategic planning constraints and the limited development opportunities means that the providers of social housing need to consider methods of providing affordable housing that do not involve new sites. This could include a re-assessment of existing Housing Association land and property holdings, which could result in the provision of additional dwellings. Also, social landlords should consider very carefully the acquisition of existing dwellings.

6.180. The Council prepares an annual Housing Statement. This will identify the number of new affordable houses provided within the District compared to losses, and the known source of future provision.

6.181. The high level of need for affordable housing in the District, coupled with the very limited opportunities for their provision, means that it is justifiable to require a low site size threshold for the provision of affordable housing. Therefore, housing developments of 15 or more dwellings, or residential sites of 0.5 of a hectare or more, irrespective of the number of dwellings, should contribute towards the provision of affordable housing. In rural settlements of less than 3,000 people the threshold should be lower (Circular 06/98 Paragraph 10). However, as the need for and provision of affordable housing will vary over the Plan period it is proposed to make these low site size threshold requirements subject to the level of need at the time a planning application for housing development is made.

6.182. As well as a need for affordable housing within the District, there is also a requirement to meet special needs. Special needs are categorised by the Housing Corporation as being people who have:

- Alcohol problems;
- Drug abuse problems;
- Mental illness;
- Learning disabilities;
- A chronic/terminal illness;
- Physical disabilities;

or are:

- Special needs elderly
- Women at risk of violence
- Women supported by aid projects;
- Young people at risk and/or leaving care;
- Ex-offenders;
- Refugees;
- A vulnerable mother and baby.

6.183. Circular 1/97 (Planning Obligations) considers that it would be appropriate for a planning obligation to include arrangements for an element of affordable housing or special needs housing in a larger residential or mixed-use development. Where a developer provides an element of special needs housing the requirement for affordable housing will either be foregone, or reduced depending on the level of special needs provision and the need for affordable housing.

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- 6.184. In certain instances it may not be practicable to provide affordable housing on a site e.g. where housing developments are remote from facilities and employment opportunities, without easy access to public transport. Where this is the case, the developer will be required to make a financial contribution towards the provision of affordable housing elsewhere within the District.
- 6.185. A housing developer may have to satisfy many requirements when undertaking a scheme: e.g. transport improvements, provision of open space etc. Therefore, when assessing the need for a housing development to provide an element of affordable housing, the economic viability of that scheme will be taken into account. Developers are advised to contact the Planning Department to discuss such matters prior to the acquisition of land for development.
- 6.186. Occupiers of affordable homes are often unable to gain access to a car. It is therefore important that affordable housing is provided in locations with easy access to essential facilities, employment opportunities and a regular public transport service. In recognition of the likely lower car ownership associated with occupiers of affordable housing there will be a lower car parking requirement for new schemes.
- 6.187. In some circumstances it may be appropriate for restrictions on density to be relaxed for affordable housing schemes in order to increase the provision of new units.

6.188. Policy HODEV5

On sites which are acceptable for housing in accordance with other policies of this plan, and which could accommodate a reasonable mix of types and sizes of housing, the council will seek by negotiation with developers, to secure an element of affordable housing or special needs housing, when proposals satisfy the following:

- (a) they are within urban areas on sites of 0.5 hectare or more in size, or where 15 or more dwellings are to be built; or**
- (b) they are within rural settlements, where the population is less than 3,000, of 0.25 hectare or more in size, or where 5 or more dwellings are to be built; and**
- (c) they are within safe and convenient access to shops, education provision and employment opportunities without the use of a car.**

The need to provide affordable housing must take into account the financial viability of the scheme; the site's characteristics and the need to achieve a successful housing development. In appropriate cases affordable housing schemes will not be subject to the normal restrictions on density and car parking standards.

There is a presumption that affordable housing will be provided as part of the proposed development of the site. In exceptional circumstances it may be acceptable, if agreed between the local planning authority and the developer, for affordable housing (where its requirement is appropriate) to be provided on another suitable site nearby, or for a financial contribution to be made towards the provision of affordable housing in other locations elsewhere in the District in lieu of the actual provision on the site.

The size and type of dwellings provided shall reflect the needs of those households requiring affordable accommodation, in accordance with the council's latest housing needs assessment.

- 6.189. Planning Policy Guidance Note 3 (PPG 3) advises that, in certain circumstances, it may be acceptable to allow affordable housing for local needs on small sites within or adjoining existing villages in rural areas, on which housing would not normally be

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permitted, as an exception to policy. The following policy sets out the circumstances under which such exceptions may be made.

- 6.190. The PPG further advises that this approach is not generally applicable within Green Belts, which are not typical of rural areas. The presumption against inappropriate development in the Green Belt remains unchanged. However, it accepts that in some of the more extensive areas of Green Belt, away from the urban fringe, some very limited development may be acceptable within existing settlements.
- 6.191. For the purposes of the following policy the term 'local' is to be interpreted as relating to the Parish within which the proposal lies along with adjoining Parishes, unless these include an urban area.

6.192. Policy HODEV6

Outside the Green Belt and in the outer parts of the Green Belt away from the urban areas, planning permission exceptionally may be granted for affordable housing within or immediately adjoining the settlements identified below, on land which would not otherwise be released for housing development, provided that:

- (a) the scheme would meet a specific, demonstrable local need which justifies the provision of additional housing at that time in that location and which would not otherwise be met; and**
- (b) there are secure arrangements to ensure that the benefits of affordable housing will be enjoyed by subsequent occupiers who are local to that area as well as by initial occupiers; and**
- (c) the scheme is small scale and of a character appropriate to the location.**

Proposals on sites adjoining those urban areas which are excluded from the Green Belt do not fall within this policy.

Suitable settlements where developments of this kind might be contemplated are:

**Alderholt
Chalbury Common
Cranborne
Gaunt's Common
Gussage All Saints
Hinton Martell
Holt
Horton
Shapwick
Sixpenny Handley
Wimborne St. Giles
Witchampton
Woodlands**

Green Belt settlements are shown in *italics*.

Gypsies

- 6.193. As part of the preparation of the Local Plan consideration has been given to the accommodation needs of Gypsies in the area. In 1978 Dorset was one of the few counties where a Designation Order had been made by the Secretary of State for the Environment under the Caravan Sites Act 1968. Since that time, unauthorised Gypsy

encampments have been mainly associated with the South East Dorset conurbation, rather than within this District. The authorised site at Mannington Park has recently been closed after the former residents were re-housed. Vacant pitches exist on other sites within eastern Dorset. The level of need will continue to be monitored, and in accordance with advice in Circular 1/94 the site at Mannington Park will be reserved should the need arise, in view of its previous use for this purpose, although it lies within the Green Belt.

6.194. Policy HODEV7

Land at Mannington Park previously used as a Gypsy caravan site will be reserved for this use should the need arise.

- 6.195. As new Gypsy sites are not a suitable use within the Green Belt, there is little opportunity for their establishment in the urban fringe other than through the re-opening of Mannington Park. However, if a need were proved to exist which could not be met in this way, the following policy provides the appropriate framework for new sites in areas outside the Green Belt. It must also be taken into account that, on Gypsy sites, business activity can be expected.

6.196. Policy HODEV8

Where a proven need exists, new Gypsy sites, including those for settled accommodation which may require ancillary buildings such as washing facilities, may be allowed outside the Green Belt, outside existing settlements, where:

- (a) they are within reasonable distance of local services and facilities such as shops, schools and medical facilities; and**
- (b) they would not be obtrusive in the landscape, and are well-screened or capable of being screened; and**
- (c) they would not cause noise or disturbance to existing residents; and**
- (d) they are served by adequate roads and accesses, bearing in mind the potential associated business use; and**
- (e) they are enclosed by boundaries which would prevent or substantially deter trespass onto neighbouring land, and do not adjoin sites of ecological or landscape importance; and**
- (f) they can be adequately serviced and drained, without risk of pollution to watercourses.**

Industrial Development and Relocation

6.197. There are a number of existing industrial estates and individual sites in East Dorset. Within these areas applications continue to be made for extensions, additional buildings or for redevelopment. These proposals are acceptable in principle, although they must be subject to detailed consideration of such matters as design, highway access and parking, landscaping and neighbourliness. The following policy expresses this principle.

6.198. Policy INDEV1

Industrial development will be permitted within the limits of the established industrial estates at Ebblake; Brook Road (Wimborne); Ferndown; Riverside (Wimborne); Stone Lane (Wimborne); Bailie Gate (Sturminster Marshall); Uddens; Gundrymoor and Woolsbridge, as defined on the Proposals Map. Elsewhere, in the urban areas as defined on the Proposals Map, development and redevelopment for the same uses within established sites for business (Use Class B1), general industry (B2), and warehousing (B8) will likewise be permitted.

6.199. In some parts of the Plan area industrial uses exist in residential areas, open countryside or other areas where they may begin to create unacceptable levels of disturbance. The following policy will therefore be applied.

6.200. Policy INDEV2

The re-location of established industrial uses will be sought where these generate a level of visual intrusion, traffic, parking, noise or other nuisance which is inappropriate to the character or amenity of the local area.

Lighting

6.201. Outdoor lighting is beneficial for a number of purposes including:

- safety of movement;
- security of movement;
- extension of working practices;
- extension of sporting and leisure activities;
- advertising of commercial enterprises;
- 'bringing on' horticultural and farming produce; and
- enhancing the amenity value of important buildings and settlements.

6.202. However, lighting can have significant environmental and amenity disbenefits. Lighting columns and associated generators and junction boxes can be visually intrusive. Poorly designed lighting can result in light spill leading to a loss of residential amenity. Light spill is also a sign of wasted energy. Light pollution of night skies can extend over wide areas. There is a concern that increased levels of outdoor lighting are also having detrimental effects on flora and fauna. Lighting also enables activities to take place through the evenings, which could result in problems of noise for nearby residents through, say, noisy sports and vehicle movements.

6.203. There is concern that additional lighting could have an adverse impact on the character of the countryside. In particular, the Cranborne Chase AONB is characterised by very low density scattered development, with little external lighting. It is important that this character is maintained. Detailed advice on the provision of external lighting is provided within the DETR publication 'Lighting in the Countryside'.

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6.204. When considering external lighting, the Council will need to be satisfied that the scheme is the minimum required for security and working purposes and that light spill is minimised. Use of external lighting for sports facilities may be restricted in the hours of use by way of condition. Detailed advice on the provision of suitable lighting schemes can be gained from the Institute of Lighting Engineers 'Guidance Notes for the Reduction of Light Pollution'.

6.205. Policy LTDEV1

Proposals for development that require external lighting will need to demonstrate that;

- a) the lighting is the minimum required for the specified use;**
- b) light spill is minimised;**
- c) lighting fixtures, including generators, columns and junction boxes are located to prevent visual intrusion.**

It is expected that applicants should submit lighting plots, and column and luminaire details to demonstrate that the scheme does not cause significant light spill. Conditions may be used to limit the hours of operation.

Recreation

6.206. The District Council intends to enhance the quality of life by providing accessible leisure and recreation services to all residents and visitors to the District.

6.207. Policies for countryside recreation are included earlier in this Chapter. The South East Dorset Green Belt provides opportunities for countryside recreation and sporting facilities for the population of both the District and the South East Dorset conurbation as a whole. Within the Green Belt, outdoor recreational facilities will be encouraged where they will not conflict with the openness and rural character of the area. Recreational facilities within the Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty must be compatible with the need to conserve and enhance the landscape.

6.208. In the urban areas, and in the villages, specific proposals for new recreational facilities are made elsewhere in this Plan. However, existing open spaces in towns and villages will generally be protected.

6.209. In some cases the existing open spaces will have been created when the area was originally developed and will have been included in the original planning permission. However, the land may not be in public ownership, even where there is an agreement for the local council to maintain it. It is possible for the landowners to seek to redevelop these areas even though they were originally provided because they were needed as public open space to serve the development that has taken place. In some cases the landowners may seek to build on the land. In other cases they may wish to sell it, for example to adjoining householders to make extensions to their gardens. As the open space was originally required to provide for the public recreational or amenity needs of the area, this will seldom be acceptable.

6.210. In other cases, open spaces were created before the planning system came into being and form an essential part of the 'public realm' of the towns and villages. Both public and private open spaces are important not only for recreation but through their contribution to the quality of life in the settlements. The quality of urban and village life is crucial if these settlements are to attract future inhabitants and act as the foci of a pattern of sustainable development. In turn, these spaces will become increasingly important as housing numbers increase.

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6.211. However, it is possible that situations may arise where a developer proposes to provide recreational or amenity land to substitute for an existing open space. For such an exchange to be acceptable, the new land will need to be clearly more valuable for recreation and amenity in terms of its size, quality and location than the land which is lost.

6.212. Policy RCDEV1

The development for other uses of public and private open space, including playing fields, allotments, amenity open space and landscaped areas, will not be allowed unless:

- (a) there is no need to retain the recreational or amenity use of the land either at present or in the foreseeable future; or**
- (b) there would be no overall net loss of recreational benefit by its development.**

6.213. Where new development takes place, it must provide for the recreation and amenity needs of its occupiers and users, unless these are already met by existing facilities, or the site is too small to require even the lowest level of provision. While this will be true for housing, it will also apply in different degrees to other developments. A town centre shopping development, for example, may need to provide for a paved pedestrian area with seats and planting.

6.214. Recreational needs are not met simply by reserving vacant land as 'open space': this must be laid out, landscaped and equipped before it can serve its function. Whether the recreation provision is adequate will depend upon this, its amount, and the distance its users will need to travel to reach it. The policies in the Plan reflect the standards set by the National Playing Fields Association's 'The Six Acre Standard: Minimum Standards for Outdoor Playing Space' (1992).

6.215. Policy RCDEV2

Where new housing is developed, the council will seek the provision of facilities for children's play and outdoor sport to the standards set out in Appendix C, unless existing facilities which meet the terms of these standards already exist, or in the case of children's play space, the occupation of the housing is limited in the case of both initial and subsequent occupiers to exclude children.

6.216. New housing requires a range of recreation facilities. In addition to children's play, other facilities such as sports fields and open areas for informal adult recreation are also necessary, although they do not need to be sited so close nearby. Sports fields in particular are most unlikely to be provided on-site in any but the largest developments and no individual housing areas of this size are proposed or expected in East Dorset within the Plan period. In the case of small developments it may not be possible to provide even such local facilities as children's play spaces on-site. Therefore, where sites are not large enough to accommodate the full range of recreation facilities, developers may provide for the needs of their development off-site, either directly or by contributing part of the cost of a scheme to serve a number of developments or a wider area.

6.217. Policy RCDEV3

Where any recreation facilities to meet the standards set out in Appendix C cannot reasonably be provided on-site, developers may provide the facilities off-site, either individually, or in co-operation with other developers.

6.218. Public open space and amenity areas must be maintained in the long term. In accordance with Paragraph B14 of Circular 1/97 Planning Obligations the Council will

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seek commuted sums from developers to secure the future maintenance of public open space provided as part of their development, where land is to be transferred to the Council. Within its role other than as a Local Planning Authority, the Council is prepared to accept the future maintenance of public open space provided that an adequate commuted sum is paid by the developer/landowner to pay for this.

- 6.219. Where a developer does not wish to transfer open space to the Council there will be a requirement to safeguard the future of the land for public open space. The developer will be required to enter into an agreement with the Council to guarantee that the land will be used for public open space and that it shall be properly maintained.

Renewable Energy

- 6.220. It is national policy to stimulate the exploitation and development of renewable energy sources wherever they have prospects of being economically attractive and environmentally acceptable. A main advantage of renewable energy is that it contributes to the reduction of the emissions of CO₂, one of the most important of the 'greenhouse' gases. Apart from the solar heating of buildings, renewable energy sources are mainly used to generate electricity: power generation currently accounts for about one third of CO₂ emissions in the UK.
- 6.221. There is currently no national or regional plan which contains specific proposals for the location and types of renewable energy generating plants: individual proposals will be made by prospective developers in response to economic considerations, including grant aid, and the opportunities which may arise. Local planning policy will therefore have to consider the impact and advantages of each proposal case by case.
- 6.222. The opportunities in East Dorset for power generating plants using renewable energy sources are limited by the position and geography of the District. Only the most prominent ridges in the Cranborne Chase AONB enjoy average wind speeds sufficiently high to provide any real potential for commercial power generation, and on these sites generators are likely to be intrusive. Smaller plants may be possible in less conspicuous positions, for example serving individual farms. Other studies suggest that the potential for hydro power is also small. The most promising sources of renewable energy seem, at present, to be firstly from 'biomass', perhaps using forestry residues or purpose-grown coppice wood or other energy crops; and, secondly, energy from waste. Planning for waste is not covered in this Plan, but is included in the Structure Plan and the County Minerals and Waste Local Plan.
- 6.223. The importance of the national objective - which represents one aspect of environmental protection - has to be balanced against the other acknowledged need, which is to protect the more local environment from threats which can arise as a consequence of developing renewable energy sources. These can include the visual and physical impacts of generating plant and transmission lines, the effects of road traffic, flue-gas cleaning effluent and changes to landscape character from the cultivation of energy crops. On the other hand, other benefits may arise, such as a new commercial use for the traditional coppice woodlands of Cranborne Chase, whose upkeep could have important benefits for wildlife.
- 6.224. Policies for the protection of important elements of the local environment are contained elsewhere in this Chapter. They will apply to renewable energy projects as to all other development. They will be particularly important where the feature of the environment which is threatened is irreplaceable, and where the scale of the impact is great. Against this will be balanced the importance of developing renewable energy sources and the contribution which each proposal is expected to make, for example towards the reduction of CO₂ emissions, both in construction and in use.
- 6.225. Proposals are most likely to be acceptable where they are small in scale; unobtrusive; close to their source of fuel supply; well placed on the road network in those cases where they are likely to generate appreciable amounts of traffic; and not damaging to

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the amenities of residents or the character of quiet rural areas through noise. Side effects of the proposals, for example the need for transmission cables in sensitive landscapes, or road improvements which are required to serve the development, will also be taken into account.

6.226. Policy RNDEV1

The development of renewable energy sources will be encouraged. Where proposals conflict with other policies of this plan, their benefits for a sustainable energy strategy will be a material consideration. Developments should satisfy the following criteria:

- a) **they are sited to minimise impact on the landscape;**
- b) **they do not generate unacceptable levels of traffic or require extensive road construction or improvements;**
- c) **there will be no significant harm to residential amenity, through noise, the proximity of the development, or through 'shadow flicker' related to wind turbines;**
- d) **associated development such as electricity transmission lines can be accommodated without damage to wildlife, amenity or landscape interests;**
- e) **development is sited to minimise possible danger to the public;**
- f) **there would be no harm to significant nature conservation interests.**

Where major structures such as towers for wind turbines are proposed, developer obligations may be sought to ensure their removal when they reach the end of their useful life.

Shopping and Commerce

- 6.227. The general structure of shopping centres in the District and their relationship to each other and to centres outside the area is described in the earlier chapters of this Plan. Policies and proposals for the development of individual centres are contained in the local area chapters. This Chapter sets out a number of general policies towards shopping proposals not covered elsewhere.
- 6.228. Although they are relatively small, the town, neighbourhood and local centres of the District perform an important role in providing local services to the communities. They include a mixture of uses, provide a wide range of services and are accessible not only by car but on foot, by cycle and by public transport by substantial numbers of people. It will be important to maintain the viability and vitality of these centres so that they may continue this function.

New Development in Town and Neighbourhood Centres

- 6.229. The rapid growth of the District and the extension of car-ownership in the 1960s, '70s and '80s, encouraged the expansion of local shopping provision. As with most other areas of the country, an important part of this was in the form of large new stores, catering predominantly for car users.
- 6.230. Against a background of national government policy which encouraged such developments, with little discrimination, on both town-centre and out-of-centre sites, local initiatives brought about the building of new superstores on the edge of the town centres of Wimborne and Ferndown and as the basis of a new centre in Verwood. A

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substantial supermarket was developed in Corfe Mullen. These acted as anchors to the centres and helped maintain their viability and vitality as the convenience shopping centres of the area. One out-of-centre store at Trickett's Cross, Ferndown, was also allowed on a former retail site.

- 6.231. During this period, smaller scale developments also took place in all the town centres, adding to their floorspace or replacing outworn buildings. These provided not only for shops but for office and service uses. This process continues.
- 6.232. The viability and vitality of the town centres of Ferndown, West Moors, Wimborne, the historic village centre at Verwood and the neighbourhood shopping centres of Corfe Mullen will be sustained and enhanced, and new retail, community and service development will be focussed on them.
- 6.233. Because new housing development in the District will be limited in future, the population is unlikely to rise significantly and in some areas may decline. Although individual prosperity and spending power are expected to increase over the Plan period, this is unlikely to lead to such a growth in retail trade that there will need to be further major additions to shopping floorspace in the town centres.
- 6.234. Against this background, sites for major new stores in the town centres have not been identified. To do so would threaten to blight substantial areas and introduce uncertainty for landowners and shopkeepers whose continued investment in other parts of the town centres will be essential to safeguard their future. Small scale development and redevelopment, however, is expected to continue and will be encouraged by the following policy. In order to maintain the character and grain of the centres, it will be desirable for developments to provide for a mix of uses including, wherever possible, some housing.
- 6.235. Acceptable uses in the town centres as defined on the Proposals Map will include those in Classes A1, A2, A3, Class B1 of the Use Classes Order (U.C.O.) 1987⁶⁸, together with a range of activities normally found in town centres but not falling into any Use Class. Larger developments falling within Use Class B1 will generally be unsuitable, because of the small scale nature of the centres, often tightly enclosed by residential areas or other constraints. However, these Classes may also encompass the type of small scale workshops or craft activities which make a positive contribution to town centre vitality for local people and tourists. These will be encouraged.

6.236. Policy SHDEV1

The development of shops, service and office uses in Classes A1, A2 and A3 of the Use Classes Order 1987 will be permitted in the town centres defined on the Proposals Map. Uses within Class B1 will be permitted where they do not result in a detrimental impact on the environment, character or operation of the centres or on the amenities of nearby properties.

Major New Stores and Other Retail Development Outside Town Centres

- 6.237. Although substantial increases in shopping provision are unlikely to be needed in the District, there may well be pressure for retail development, and particularly large new stores, in urban areas outside town centres, which will seek a trading advantage by providing a more attractive alternative to town centre shopping for car users.

⁶⁸ A full description of these uses will be found within the Use Classes Order. Briefly summarised, Class A1 comprises shops, Class A2 financial and professional services provided to the public such as banks and building societies, Class A3 the sale of food and drink for consumption on the premises or for take-away, and Class B1 offices, research or industrial processes of a kind that can be carried out in any residential area without damage to amenity.

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Government policy advice suggests a 'sequential test' for new shopping proposals⁶⁹ under which the first preference should be for town centre sites, followed by edge-of-centre sites and then by out-of-centre sites but only in locations that are or can be made accessible by a choice of means of transport.

- 6.238. Major new stores proposed on sites away from existing town centres could threaten their role by drawing trade from them, reducing the range of facilities and goods which they offer. They could also add to the length and number of trips by car, contributing to congestion and the emission of greenhouse gases and pollution. Unless located and designed to serve pedestrians, cyclists and bus passengers, they would be likely to be comparatively less accessible to these sections of the public. The attraction of trade to major new stores could also draw trade from local convenience shops and village stores whose loss would reduce the accessibility of local services, especially for those without the use of a car, and add to the need to travel. The following policy will therefore be applied.

6.239. Policy SHDEV2

Major retail developments and large stores will only be allowed outside existing town centres where there is an identifiable need for such development. If a need is proven and this cannot be accommodated within a town centre, a sequential approach will be used to identify locations for provision, so that the next preferred location would be edge-of-centre, followed by sites associated with district centres/existing major retail provision, and finally out-of-centre sites. The provision of major retail development and large stores must not by themselves, or cumulatively with other provision:

- a) **have an unacceptable impact upon the vitality and viability of existing centres and the policies or proposals for their sustainance and enhancement, or endanger the continued operation of neighbourhood or village shops,**
- b) **reduce the quality, diversity, attractiveness and character of any of the centres and their role in the economic and social life of the community,**
- c) **reduce the range of services which the centres provide, endanger future investment in them or lead to shops or other premises falling vacant in the primary retail areas,**

They should also:

- d) **be served by sufficiently frequent public transport from an area wide enough to allow a significant proportion of customers to reach the store by means other than by car,**
- e) **be easily accessible for pedestrians, disabled people and cyclists from the surrounding area, and**
- f) **help achieve the overall aim of reducing reliance on the car.**

Retail Warehouses

- 6.240. A particular form of large store which has developed in recent years outside town centres has been the retail warehouse. These commonly include D-i-Y stores, electrical goods and carpet and furniture shops, although the range of goods which they sell is increasing. They have expanded to the extent that it is sometimes difficult to find town centre shops selling some of these items. Although 'retail warehousing' is the commonly used term, they are effectively shops, and are classed as such in the

⁶⁹ Planning Policy Guidance Note 6 (1996), para 1.10.

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1987 Use Classes Order. They will therefore be considered under the preceding policy as would any other large stores in the same situation.

- 6.241. Where retail warehouses are permitted, they are likely to have been proposed for specific types of goods whose sale out-of-centre might not be expected to undermine the viability of neighbouring town centres. Under these circumstances, it will be important that the classes of goods which they can sell are limited by planning condition, to prevent the transformation of the warehouses into other types of shop, while remaining within the same use class, without the need for further planning permission.

6.242. Policy SHDEV3

Where it is necessary to restrict the range of goods sold in order to avoid threatening the vitality or viability of town or neighbourhood centres, appropriate conditions will be imposed on planning permissions for retail warehouses.

- 6.243. It is also possible that retail warehouses, which are often sited on industrial estates, might take up land reserved for ordinary warehousing, industrial or other employment uses. This is not a concern where the supply of such land is more than adequate for the needs of industry, but arises where a surplus does not exist. The following policy will therefore apply.

6.244. Policy SHDEV4

Retail warehouses will only be permitted on employment sites where it can be demonstrated that there is an adequacy of supply of such land.

Restaurants and Hot Food Take-away Shops

- 6.245. Restaurants and hot food take-aways are an essential feature of most town centres and are increasingly common in local shopping parades in residential areas. However, proposals for new developments of this kind are a frequent cause of concern because of the traffic, noise and smells which they can create, often late into the evening. The following policy is therefore included to ensure that they are suitably located.
- 6.246. Even in town centres there is a significant resident population, whose continued presence is particularly important to maintain the vitality and security of the centre outside shopping hours. It is therefore also essential to protect the amenities of these residents. The policy proposes to control the hours of operation of restaurants and take-aways in town centres where they might disturb residents.
- 6.247. A further feature of many such establishments is the flues which are required. These can be very intrusive visually, not only in historic town centres but in more modern but well-kept shopping areas, and be significantly damaging to their appearance and attractiveness. This issue is therefore also covered by the policy.

6.248. Policy SHDEV5

Restaurants and hot food take-away shops will not be permitted in residential areas or in neighbourhood centres in circumstances where they would damage the amenities of local residents. Elsewhere in district shopping centres and town centres, and in areas of commercial, industrial or mixed uses, permissions will be granted, where any flues associated with the use can be provided without detriment to the appearance of the building or the area. Hours of operation will be limited by Conditions on Planning Permissions where necessary to safeguard the amenities of nearby residential or other uses.

Corner Shops

6.249. In order to encourage the development of local shops, to provide greater accessibility particularly for those without cars, and to reduce the need to travel, the following policy will be applied.

6.250. Policy SHDEV6

Proposals for small scale shopping facilities, designed to meet the needs of the immediate locality, will be permitted in residential areas within the urban areas and in rural village policy envelopes defined on the Proposals Map.

Farm Shops

6.251. Sale of produce from a farm holding, together with a small amount of imported goods, does not normally require planning permission. In recent years a number of farm shops have been set up in the District which, due to the nature of the sales, do require planning permission. These can fulfil a useful function in rural areas but can also divert trade from village shops which may themselves be struggling to continue in business. Farm shops are also frequently inaccessible to those without cars.

6.252. In the context of the following policy, “modest-sized” would usually limit the gross floor area to 75m². This is in order to prevent the establishment of larger sized shops or supermarkets throughout the countryside which would be likely to draw trade from a wide area, adding to travel demands, and be out of keeping with the rural character. The re-use of existing buildings will generally be preferable to the construction of new buildings, for which permission will be given only where they accord with the other policies of the Plan, particularly those on countryside and design.

6.253. Policy SHDEV7

Farm shops will be permitted where;

- a) they would have no adverse impact upon existing local shops;**
- b) their size and the range of goods sold would not be likely to significantly increase car travel, and**
- c) they would not harm the character of the rural area.**

6.254. The vitality of small rural communities is often heavily dependant on the existence of local facilities such as the village shop and public house, the loss of which can lead to rapid and permanent change to the nature of the community, change in the population structure and increased use of the motor vehicle. Village shops and public houses are very sensitive to the efforts, imagination and initiative of their proprietors and, whilst the planning system cannot be used to support individual businesses, maintaining the vitality of small rural communities is a valid planning objective.

6.255. The following policy applies to all rural communities. These do not include the urban areas of Wimborne, Colehill, Ferndown, West Parley, Corfe Mullen, West Moors, Verwood and St Leonards and St Ives.

6.256. Policy SHDEV8

In small rural communities, the Council will resist proposals which would result in the loss of shops, public houses or community facilities unless it can be clearly demonstrated that the uses are unviable or that there are adequate alternative facilities available locally.

Telecommunications

Telecommunications Masts and Towers

- 6.257. Telecommunications equipment includes cables, masts and towers, and aërials and dishes. It includes equipment both for broadcasting and for one-to-one communications, although at present the development of masts and antennæ for cellular radio telephones is particularly rapid and extensive. Many types of telecommunications equipment do not require express planning permission but may be installed under permitted development rights.
- 6.258. It is national policy that the planning system should encourage and not hinder new telecommunications development. However, this does not mean the appearance of buildings, towns and the countryside can be allowed to suffer serious damage, or that the ecology of identified sites of nature conservation importance should be degraded. The Authority will consider the prevailing government advice which stresses the importance of modern communications as an essential part of the local community and national economy in determining planning applications.
- 6.259. Although government advice stresses the value of mast sharing for antennæ, this may lead to increases in the masts' height to give enough separation between the different operators' equipment. In turn there will need to be a greater weight and strength of construction of the masts to support this additional height. In some cases, for example where they could be largely screened by trees, separate, slimmer and lower masts may be a better solution. Equally, in the case of cellular telephone antennæ, smaller but more numerous masts, each covering a narrower area, may be less damaging than fewer, larger masts, perhaps on prominent hilltops, covering wide areas. Such smaller masts, or antennæ on buildings in towns, are likely to become more common as networks become more dense.

6.260. Policy TEDEV1

In determining whether approval of siting and appearance is required or considering applications for planning permission from licensed telecommunications operators the planning authority will need to be satisfied that:

- a) the siting and external appearance of apparatus, including any location or landscaping requirements, have been designed to minimise the impact of such apparatus on amenity, while respecting operational efficiency;**
 - b) antennæ have, so far as is practicable, been sited so as to minimise their effect on the external appearance of the building on which they are installed;**
 - c) applicants for large masts have shown evidence that they have explored the possibility of erecting antennæ on an existing building, mast or other structure;**
 - d) applicants have considered the need to include additional structural capacity to take account of the growing demands for network development, including that of other operators.**
- 6.261. Other developments may, in turn, have an impact on telecommunications. In particular, bulky buildings or large structures such as wind turbines may mask or reflect signals, or block microwave links which must follow line-of-sight paths. This may be a material consideration in determining planning applications and is covered by the following policy.

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6.262. Policy TEDEV2

The potential impact of proposals for bulky buildings or other structures upon known telecommunications links will be taken into account in determining planning applications. Measures to mitigate significant impacts will be required as a condition of planning permission.

Local Cabling

6.263. A major impact of telecommunications can be through the introduction of new overhead wiring. This can have a severe impact on the appearance of towns, villages and countryside. The following policies will therefore be applied.

6.264. Policy TEDEV3

On all new housing, commercial and industrial sites of 0.5 ha or more, the developer will be required to provide underground ducting for telecommunications cables, suitable for common use by a number of operators.

6.265. A policy on overhead cables in Conservation Areas is contained in Section 1 of this Chapter (Policy BUCON4, para. 6.130).

Tourism

6.266. The character of the District lends itself to the development of rural and heritage based tourism. This provides a major benefit not only to its visitors but also to the District in terms of job and wealth creation. Subject to the policies for the protection of the environment of the area, the Planning Authority will encourage the development of appropriate facilities, such as farm diversification through the conversion of traditionally constructed farm buildings to tourist accommodation, including self catering units, or for attractions or facilities such as craft studios, or riding holidays. Policies for the conversion of existing buildings in the countryside are included under the countryside policies earlier in this Chapter. Other rural attractions could be based on farming, rural life, nature conservation and the history and archaeology of the area.

6.267. In the urban areas, encouragement will be given to the provision of additional hotel accommodation or the development of tourist attractions.

6.268. Careful consideration is required in terms of the impact of tourist related facilities on the character and amenities of the town, village or countryside. It is often the case that such facilities are required within particularly attractive locations as these are the places that people wish to visit. The following policy will therefore be applied.

6.269. Policy TODEV1

The development of tourist attractions, accommodation or facilities will be supported, subject to there being no unacceptable impact upon the character and appearance of the surrounding area.

Caravans and Camping

6.270. Camping and caravanning remain popular forms of tourism. They bring valuable additional income to the local economy. However, their impact upon the rural environment can be severe. Static caravan sites and holiday chalets are essentially forms of permanent development, whose occupation is difficult to control and which are essentially unsuitable within the open countryside.

6.271. Sites for touring caravans and camping also conflict directly with the aims of the Green Belt. Elsewhere they are likely to be more acceptable, although in the Area of

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Outstanding Natural Beauty or Areas of Great Landscape Value they can damage the landscape quality, unless they are small in size and sensitively sited and landscaped. The number of suitable sites in these areas are likely to be limited and caravans and camping will be subject like other development to the policies set out earlier in this Chapter which protect the designated landscapes.

- 6.272. Elsewhere in the countryside there is more scope for touring caravan and camp sites, particularly in well-wooded areas, although it is important that they should be unobtrusive and should not threaten the rural character through an over-concentration of sites. The following policies will therefore be applied.

6.273. Policy TODEV2

New sites or extensions to sites for static or touring caravans, tents, chalets or cabins for holiday use will not be permitted within the Green Belt, or where it would cause harm to the landscape character of the AONB, or Area of Great Landscape Value. Elsewhere, such development will be permitted if the following criteria are satisfied:

- a) **the site is well screened from external views by means of landform or landscaping;**
 - b) **the development would not harm residential amenity;**
 - c) **any additional traffic can safely be accommodated on the local highway network;**
 - d) **the proposal would not harm an important wildlife habitat;**
 - e) **there would be no detrimental impact upon a site of archaeological importance, listed building, or conservation area;**
 - f) **the site is well laid out to provide adequate room for pitches and will allow for generous landscaping;**
 - g) **it is established that any risk of flooding is acceptable.**
- 6.274. A high standard of layout, and landscaping will be required on any new site, or, within existing sites where extension or new facilities are proposed. Sites which are cramped, where space for landscaping or the standard of proposed landscaping are inadequate, will not be permitted. These issues are covered by the design and landscaping policies in Section 3 of this Chapter.

Section 3 Design Policies Applying to All Developments

- 6.275. This section of the Chapter contains the third main division of policies, namely those which will apply to all developments in the Plan area. Among them are those which are concerned with the location of development (where it is not already covered by the direct proposals of the Plan) and what can broadly be described as 'design' matters.

Location of Development

- 6.276. The major developments which are expected in East Dorset in the Plan period are covered by specific proposals or policies in the local area chapters. These take into account the importance of reducing the need for travel and ensuring that new land uses are accessible by a variety of means where they are likely to be used by many people. However, the same principles, which are set out both in government advice and in the Structure Plan, will apply to other development proposals which may come forward during the life of this Plan.

6.277. Policy DES1

Development will be permitted in locations where there is a choice of means of travel and where dependence on the motor car will be reduced. Permission will not be granted for development which increases dependence on the motor car.

Location in Relation to Other Land Uses

- 6.278. New developments may have a significant impact upon their surroundings through noise, smell, disturbance, lighting or other pollutants. Whether these impacts are acceptable will depend on the nature of the surroundings. For example, development which generates noise may be acceptable in some types of open country, but may not be so where it is close to housing, or where it is in an area of landscape value whose character depends partly upon quiet and a sense of remoteness.

- 6.279. In turn, it will be important to avoid siting sensitive development close to other uses which might have similar impacts upon it, or which might lead to restrictions on those uses or costly changes to reduce their effects. Thus, for example, it may be undesirable to allow new housing close to industry, or development close to existing sewage treatment works.

6.280. Policy DES2

Developments will not be permitted which will either impose or suffer unacceptable impacts on or from existing or likely future development or land uses in terms of noise, smell, safety, health, lighting, disturbance, traffic or other pollution.

- 6.281. Few modern developments, especially buildings, are self-contained. They are connected to a wide web of services including the road network, telecommunications, electricity and water supplies and sewerage. While many of these are provided by private sector companies and are a matter between the developer and the service provider, the highway network in particular needs to be considered by the planning process. The following policy covers the general issue.

6.282. Policy DES3

New development that generates vehicular traffic will only be allowed where it is served by a vehicular access and local highway network that is adequate in terms of road safety and traffic capacity. Where the need arises for highway

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improvements as a direct result of the development, then the developer may themselves be required to pay the cost of those improvements.

People with a Mobility Impediment

- 6.283. In recent years legislation and government advice have sought to redress the disadvantage that disabled people encounter in using a built environment which, more often than not, has been designed for those whose mobility or faculties are unimpaired.
- 6.284. The specific requirements of those with a mobility impediment must be considered in order to provide relatively easy and direct access within residential and employment areas and to shopping, leisure and community facilities. Care must be taken in the layout of pedestrian routes and the choice of paving materials and ramps must be of a suitable gradient and sufficient width. All highway improvements and development proposals must take account of the difficulties experienced by those with a mobility impediment in negotiating kerbs and steps. Therefore suitable ramps should be provided at crossing points. In areas of architectural or historic importance, the need to provide for mobility must be balanced against the needs of conservation.
- 6.285. Much greater importance has now been attached through the Disabled Persons Acts to access into public buildings and the provision of facilities within them. Accessibility for the disabled is also an important feature to be considered in new housing development. Of the private household population in the District in 1991, 12% suffered some form of disability. 23% of households had one or more disabled members. While they will occupy a substantial part of the housing stock, disabled people may also need or wish to visit any of the housing in the area. Internal standards for dwellings are not a matter for planning and are covered by other legislation. However, the external layout of housing developments is a matter with which planning is properly concerned. The guidelines for car parking provision for the disabled are set out in Appendix B.

6.286. Policy DES4

New development, to which the general public expects to have access, and highway improvements, rights of way improvements, environmental improvement schemes, and traffic management schemes will only be permitted if they are designed to meet the needs of the people with impaired mobility. This should include accessible parking spaces, convenient movement along pathways and an unhindered approach to buildings, including disabled persons' lavatories.

Landscaping

- 6.287. As has been described in Section 1 of this Chapter, much of the landscape of the District is highly attractive. However, some areas on the urban fringe show signs of neglect or visual clutter, and in places new developments present a raw edge to the surrounding countryside. It is the intention of the Plan to protect existing landscapes and to improve areas where the landscape has become degraded. Policies for the protection of countryside areas including the Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty and the Areas of Great Landscape Value are contained in the section of this Chapter dealing with countryside policies. There are also important 'landscape' features within urban areas and villages although these are, more clearly than in the countryside, the result of deliberate design or planting. They include individual trees or larger groups or areas of woodland, green open spaces and 'hard landscaped' areas. It is important that they too should be protected so as to maintain the attractiveness and character of the District's towns and villages. The Planning Authority will continue its own programme of tree planting in public open spaces, roadside verges and urban and

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suburban sites, and will continue to encourage, advise and grant aid tree planting initiatives by individuals, organisations and community groups.

- 6.288. New buildings or extensions, above-ground structures or changes in the use of open land, inevitably have an impact on the appearance of an area. The treatment of the spaces within and around the sites of such developments is of great importance and will require appropriate soft or hard landscaping. In the case of private dwellings this will generally take the form of gardens whose design will be a matter for the private taste of the occupants. Landscaping will generally be a concern of the Local Planning Authority either where trees, planting or other features form part of public spaces within a development; or where they are visible from outside the site and are important to the appearance of the local area; or where they are important to the relationship of the development with its surroundings. Particular care also needs to be taken in areas whose character is especially valuable and should be conserved in the long term, such as Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty.
- 6.289. Many local features have some wildlife value, such as heaths, hedgerows, ponds and streams, although they are not designated under the nature conservation policies in Section 1 of this Chapter. Whilst their importance will not be so great as to prevent development altogether, the siting and layout of buildings, as well as the landscaping scheme, should retain, protect and re-establish them where appropriate. This may be of particular significance where a feature forms a corridor for the movement of wildlife between other areas of greater wildlife importance and these should be preserved and reinforced wherever possible, in order to conserve and enhance their wildlife, landscape and amenity value. Conditions may be applied or planning obligations sought for their long term management.

6.290. Policy DES5

Development proposals will be permitted in the following circumstances only where they are accompanied by detailed landscaping schemes:

- a) where there are open, public spaces within the scheme;
- b) where landscaping is an intrinsic part of the development or is necessary to ensure an acceptable appearance;
- c) where it is necessary to reduce the impact of the scheme or to screen it from its neighbours; or
- d) in identified areas of aesthetic or historic importance, such as AONBs, AGLVs, Conservation Areas, or within the setting of a listed building.

Where there are features such as heaths, small woods, trees, treebelts, earthworks, green lanes or drove roads, hedges, ponds, watercourses, walls or open spaces which are important to the appearance, character, history, or nature conservation value of the local area or they maintain the continuity of important wildlife corridors or stepping stones, these should be retained as far as it is practical. Where they are unavoidably lost, then, where the opportunity exists, they should be replaced nearby.

- 6.291. Where development schemes are on the edges of settlements, the associated landscaping may be required to extend into the adjoining countryside to soften or screen the edge of the urban area. The Planning Authority may also carry out landscaping and tree-planting schemes using grant aid and other means particularly in areas on the urban fringe, the edges of industrial estates and to reduce the impact of existing eyesores in the landscape.
- 6.292. Good quality landscaping schemes should:
- (a) include a survey of any features of importance on the site, especially trees, hedges, watercourses, walls and historic or archaeological remains;

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- (b) as far as possible retain and integrate these landscape features in the proposed landscaping scheme and include proposals for their protection during building works (e.g. by fencing);
- (c) include proposals for new paving, structures and planting showing the location, species and planting size of new trees and shrubs;
- (d) provide arrangements for the replacement of failed planting and future maintenance for a specified period to allow it to become established. Arrangements for longer term management will be necessary for features which are of importance for nature conservation.

Landscaping proposals are an integral part of the design of any substantial development and may affect the position and form of buildings, accesses, roads and footpaths within a site. They will therefore need to be submitted as part of any detailed or 'reserved matters' planning application. The District Council's publication 'Design Requirements for Landscaping New Residential Areas' provides Supplementary Planning Guidance for developers of housing sites.

- 6.293. The impact of new development on the countryside can be compounded where exotic species are used in landscaping schemes. Both in order to ensure that landscaping schemes respect the natural character of the countryside and for the value that they have for wildlife, native species should be used in rural areas. Exotic species may be appropriately included within urban areas.

6.294. Policy DES6

Landscaping schemes in rural areas and on the edge of settlements should be comprised of indigenous species.

- 6.295. Where it is expedient in the interests of amenity, a tree preservation order (TPO) will be made to protect trees, groups of trees or woodlands. Decisions on applications to cut down, uproot, top or lop a tree or groups of trees which are the subject of a TPO will be based on the merits of the case, whether the proposal is justified and the likely impact of the proposal on the amenity of the area in the wider public interest.

6.296. Policy DES7

Where express consent is needed, the felling of any tree or trees will only be permitted where the loss to public amenity is outweighed by one or more of the following:

- a) **the benefits arising from the development that requires the removal of the tree or trees,**
- b) **the tree or trees are proven to be adversely affecting the structural condition or safety of a building,**
- c) **the tree or trees should be replaced as a matter of good silvicultural practice, or**
- d) **the tree or trees present an unacceptable risk to the safety of the public.**

Where trees of amenity value are unavoidably lost, then, where the opportunity exists, they should be replaced nearby.

- 6.297. All planning applications for the development of land containing existing trees will need to include a survey identifying the location, species, size and crown spread of all trees on the site and on adjacent land which might be affected by development, in accordance with BS 5837: 1991 'Trees in Relation to Construction'.
- 6.298. In many parts of the District there are areas of woodland or tree belts within or immediately adjoining the built-up areas of the towns, or villages, which are important in providing the 'structural landscaping' which forms the setting or landscape

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framework for parts of the settlements. These trees are by definition of great 'amenity value' and will be protected through the mechanism of Tree Preservation Orders.

Quality of Design

6.299. It is the firm intention of the Local Planning Authority to raise significantly the standard of design and the quality of development. It is accepted by government that good design should be the aim of all who are involved in the development process and that any development should result in a 'benefit' in environmental and landscape terms. Proposals for individual sites in the local area chapters of the plan give guidance on broad matters of scale, density, height, massing, layout, landscape and access, where this is necessary; these are not matters for which general policy can be set for the whole Plan area. The East Dorset Countryside Design Summary (Supplementary Planning Guidance No. 21) details specific design criteria appropriate to the rural areas of the District.

6.300. Policy DES8

Development proposals will be permitted if:

a) they are compatible with or improve their surroundings in:

- i) layout;**
- ii) site coverage;**
- iii) architectural style;**
- iv) scale;**
- v) bulk;**
- vi) height;**
- vii) materials;**
- viii) landscaping;**
- ix) visual impact;**
- x) their relationship to nearby properties; and**
- xi) their relationship to mature trees.**

These factors will be assessed in the context of the sites themselves, their immediate surroundings and, if material, more distant views.

- b) in towns and villages, they will harmonise with the townscape and general character of the areas in which they are set, and**
- c) in the countryside, they will be easily assimilated into the landscape or are well-related to a group of established buildings.**

6.301. The density of development permitted on any site, including those sites specifically proposed for development in this plan, will be dependent upon the quality of the design which is achieved.

6.302. Wherever appropriate, the Local Planning Authority will prepare a design brief or development brief for a site and developers should enquire whether one is available before starting design work. In any event, developers are reminded that they should normally arrange to discuss their intentions with officers of the Planning Authority at the earliest possible stage.

6.303. The following policies cover issues which developers should consider when preparing their designs. They will not by themselves ensure that a design is of good quality, but they are matters which a good design will have taken into account.

Materials

6.304. Designs may follow a variety of styles and, even in Conservation Areas, modern materials may be used as part of good modern designs to the enhancement of the area. However, the use of poor quality materials, or the use of inappropriate modern materials in designs which seek to mimic traditional buildings, will only be damaging to areas where the built or natural environment is of high quality. In historic towns and villages in particular, materials should be used which reflect and reinforce the distinctiveness of the local character.

6.305. Policy DES9

Development will be permitted where the type and quality of materials used are compatible with, or enhance, the nature of the scheme itself, its site and its surroundings.

Designing Out Crime

6.306. Designs for buildings, public spaces and landscaped areas should take account of the need to reduce the opportunities for crime and to increase security. There is a wide range of possible measures which can be taken and design features which can be built in, from the use of overlooked public spaces and wide footpaths and cycle routes with good lighting, to the use of planting to prevent 'dead ground' or give security to rear property boundaries. Advice is available from the Police Crime Prevention Service and applicants should discuss possible design features with the Local Planning Authority, particularly in the case of larger new developments or those in sensitive locations such as Conservation Areas.

6.307. It will be important to strike a balance between measures to deter crime and other design considerations, including visual quality: it will be desirable to avoid the creation of a 'fortress' atmosphere in streets and neighbourhoods. As the form of each development will be different, it would arbitrary for local plan policy to require that particular features or design approaches should be included. Therefore a general policy statement is made.

6.308. Policy DES10

The reduction, by careful design, of the risk of crime will be a material consideration in determining planning applications.

Design of Roads, Cycle and Pedestrian Routes

6.309. The relationship of land uses and transport, traffic and roads is a complex one and involves a wide range of considerations. Those which affect the general location of development are dealt with in later sections of this Chapter.

6.310. In addition there are questions of the relationship of proposed developments to the local road network; the design of roads, cycle and pedestrian routes within sites; and the spaces which these form between buildings. In most developments, roads and parking areas form the main public areas. Their sensitive design, the use of attractive materials, landscape planting, the means by which roads are enclosed and separated from individual properties by walls, or hedges, and how the open spaces containing the roads and paths are shaped by the surrounding buildings, are key questions which must be considered in site designs at the same time as the more practical aspects of road safety, capacity, design speeds and the role of individual roads in the network.

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- 6.311. New roads and road improvements should be designed to blend into their surroundings, minimising disturbance to existing natural features, and respecting the character of historic towns and villages. They should include generous landscaping where they would otherwise have a significant impact on the landscape.
- 6.312. Main routes such as Strategic Roads or District and Local Distributor Roads are important because of their heavy use: they provide the most public areas from which an area is seen. In their case particularly, good quality landscaping and the use of walls and hedges for enclosure will be important. Normally, where they pass through towns or housing areas, close boarded wooden fencing will not be an appropriate form of boundary treatment, unless accompanied by a densely planted landscaping strip or hedge between the fencing and the road.

6.313. Policy DES11

Development will only be allowed where the form, materials, lighting, landscape planting and means of enclosure of roads, cycleways, footpaths and parking areas, together with the relationship of buildings and property boundaries to these spaces, respect or enhance their surroundings.

Road Layout in Residential Areas

- 6.314. The County Highway Authority and the Dorset Planning Officers Panel have prepared and published "A Design Guide for Roads in Residential Areas". This will be treated as Supplementary Planning Guidance and is available from the District and County Council Offices. It deals with a range of design issues including the types of road and road hierarchy which will be necessary to serve housing developments. It should be consulted by intending developers before beginning design work.

Highway Access

- 6.315. Most forms of development will require access from a highway for its occupiers or users, or for servicing. Planning permission is not always required for the formation of a new access, but generally the position and design of the access will be a key part of a development proposal, and its design will need to take particular account of highway safety.

6.316. Policy DES12

Development proposals must provide satisfactory access to the highway network, where this is needed, and not cause or increase danger to road users.

Section 4 Policies on Transport

- 6.317. The Structure Plan recognises that good communications are vital to a healthy economy and high quality of life. The key aim of Dorset's transport strategy is therefore to provide opportunities to meet travel needs in ways which minimise environmental damage and costs, provide maximum choice and improve safety.

The Road Hierarchy

- 6.318. Nearly all journeys in Dorset use the existing highway network and a sustainable transport strategy requires the efficient and safe use of this network. A hierarchy of roads allows the signing of traffic onto roads most relevant for the journey purpose. It also aids the reduction of extraneous traffic in residential and shopping areas, thereby improving the environment for the local population and assisting road safety.

6.319. Policy TRANS1

The levels of the road hierarchy are defined as follows:

Strategic Roads

- | | |
|-----------------------------|--|
| 1) Primary Roads | Defined nationally and in the Structure Plan |
| 2) County Distributor Roads | |

Non Strategic Roads

- | | |
|-------------------------------|------------------------|
| 3) District Distributor Roads | Defined in Local Plans |
| 4) Local Distributor Roads | |
| 5) Other Rural Roads | |
| 6) Access and Service Roads | |

Individual roads within the hierarchy are listed in Appendix A.

- 6.320. In defining the Primary, County Distributor and District Distributor networks as shown in the figure in Appendix A1, it is assumed that new roads will be substantially completed or committed for construction by the end of the Plan period. However, the hierarchy will vary within the life of the Plan as new roads are completed and existing roads regraded. Roads forming part of the defined hierarchy are identified in Appendix A. The policies and standards applying to the road hierarchy are defined below.

Strategic Road Network

- 6.321. Dorset has a two-tier strategic road network. Primary roads are defined nationally and form part of the National Primary Route Network. County Distributor Roads link towns and centres of activity to each other and to the primary network. These routes provide for longer distance journeys and for lorry movements in particular. Encouraging traffic to use this higher quality network reduces environmental and safety problems on less suitable roads.
- 6.322. The strategic highway network will be managed to ensure maximum operational efficiency by such measures as junction improvements and by the restriction of parking, turning movements and development access.

Non-Strategic Road Network

6.323. On the non-strategic road network a main objective will be improved highway safety. In order to improve highway safety parking, turning movements and development access will be severely restricted.

6.324. Policy TRANS2

New accesses or direct accesses to new development will be permitted on the non-strategic road network where they provide:

- a) **visibility in accordance with the advice provided in DETR Good Practice Guide: Places, Streets and Movement (September 1998);**
- b) **on-site parking in accordance with the standards set out in Appendix B to this plan; and**
- c) **turning space within the site to enable vehicles to enter and leave in forward gear.**

District Distributor Roads

6.325. District Distributor Roads are designed to connect areas of residential, shopping, industrial and commercial development with each other and to the Strategic Road Network.

6.326. Limited access to District Distributor Roads and limited on-street parking will reduce the number of potential conflict points and will improve road safety and the free flow of traffic. Where it is possible to incorporate a verge this will segregate pedestrians and cyclists from traffic in order to increase safety and create a more pleasant environment. New roads will incorporate existing natural features, including hedgerows and trees. Landscape treatment will include the planting of groups of trees and hedgerows in order to provide a pleasant environment for road users, to blend new roads into the existing landscape, and to provide screening.

6.327. Policy TRANS3

Access to development from District Distributor roads will be restricted in order to maintain operational efficiency and minimise potential for conflict. Where it is necessary to introduce junctions to serve new development provision of visibility and junction spacing will be required commensurate with extant guidance for the type of access proposed.

6.328. Policy TRANS4

On newly constructed District Distributor Roads there will be no frontage access. When footways and cycle tracks are provided along the road they will be divided from the carriageway by a landscaped verge designed to secure segregation from motor vehicles.

6.329. Policy TRANS5

On existing District Distributor Roads the opportunity will be taken to close existing vehicular frontage access when development takes place and alternative means of access can be obtained.

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Other Rural Roads

- 6.330. It is recognised that non-strategic roads in rural areas, other than those defined as District Distributor Roads, are generally multi-purpose. They connect residential, shopping, commercial and agricultural areas with each other. They also serve as a means of direct access to properties, as a means of access to more important roads from villages and local areas, and as through routes for small volumes of traffic to other villages and areas beyond the immediate locality. They also carry a variety of users, including pedestrians, cyclists, horse riders, cars, agricultural traffic and lorries. For this reason improvements must take account of a range of users, and retain an appropriate balance between their needs.
- 6.331. *Improvements to other rural roads will be limited to those required to improve safety for all users and, where this is possible, these will be designed so as to discourage overall increases in traffic speeds. Particularly in villages or on lengths of road which connect outlying housing to village facilities, priority will be given to improvements which enhance pedestrian and cyclists' safety including, where this cannot be achieved otherwise, the provision of segregated footways and cycleways. On appropriate roads within villages, traffic management schemes may be introduced to calm the traffic.*

Urban Local Distributor Roads

- 6.332. Urban Local Distributor roads distribute traffic within the urban areas. They form the main connection between residential and industrial areas and the District Distributor network and thence to the County Distributor and Primary networks.
- 6.333. The purpose of Urban Local Distributor roads is to serve local traffic, including pedestrians and cyclists. In order to achieve this, such roads will be designed to deter through traffic and transfer it onto roads of a higher status and to control speed in order to improve safety and the environment.
- 6.334. *New Local Distributor roads will be designed to discourage extraneous traffic from entering the areas they serve. They will be planned as an integral part of the layout of new development areas with provision for footways, cycleways and landscaping.*
- 6.335. *On existing Local Distributor roads, through traffic will be diverted onto roads of a higher status by means of traffic management. Roads will be adapted to serve local needs only, by restriction of carriageway width, widening of footways and verges, landscape treatment and other suitable means to deter extraneous traffic and enhance the quality of the environment.*
- 6.336. Other policies in the Plan such as those for Conservation Areas will need to be taken into account. Where roads pass through defined village policy envelopes, shopping centres or through Conservation Areas a balance will need to be struck between the needs of highway users and the interests of conservation and other environmental factors, protected by other policies of the Plan. However, it will be crucial to maintain highway safety.

Access and Service Roads

- 6.337. Access and Service Roads occur throughout the developed parts of the Plan area. These provide connections between specific areas of development and the remainder of the highway network and include minor residential roads, culs-de-sac and industrial and commercial area service roads.

Pedestrians and Cyclists

- 6.338. The majority of road users are pedestrians for one or more stages of every journey. Shorter distance journeys are likely to be made on foot and over 60% of journeys under 1.5km are made solely on foot, but pedestrian journeys rarely exceed 3km for most trip purposes. In urban areas about 30% of all journeys are made on foot.
- 6.339. Cycling is a healthy, cheap and environmentally friendly means of transport. Cycle sales are consistently higher than for cars, with adult cycle sales outstripping children's by more than 4:1. In addition, cycling is widely accessible to both adults and children, and has great potential as a means of transport.
- 6.340. Whilst cycling represents only 3% of the total national travel, this proportion is expected to increase as congestion in urban areas and recreational cycling increases. 75% of all cycle journeys are under 8.5km (5 miles) in length, this short trip length being a particular feature of shopping trips, journeys to school and social visits. Safety is the major barrier to increased cycling and, in countries which have more successfully planned for the bicycle, usage is higher than in the United Kingdom.
- 6.341. The programme of cycle schemes to be progressed is contained in Chapter 7. Priority will be given to safe routes to school.
- 6.342. The problems and requirements of pedestrians and cyclists are being considered by the Planning and Highways authorities with the aim of improving facilities and identifying suitable routes. Measures will include improved direction signing, improved access to transport interchanges and links to adjoining local authority areas.
- 6.343. *In order to encourage a sustainable pattern of movement for shorter journeys, provision will be made for a safe and attractive pedestrian network in all towns, villages and to the surrounding countryside.*
- 6.344. *Cycle and pedestrian facilities will be provided as part of new highway improvements, environmental improvements and traffic management schemes. Improved cycle parking facilities will be provided at commercial, industrial development and recreational centres within the District. Provision of cycle parking will be required in non-residential development, where that development is likely to attract significant numbers of people.*
- 6.345. New development can create opportunities for safe and convenient walking and cycling thereby promoting the use of non-motorised travel for local journeys. It may also play a role in reducing journey lengths.
- 6.346. Provision for safe and attractive pedestrian and cycle movement will be incorporated within all new housing, commercial and industrial layouts. This will include the provision of links with the existing and proposed footway and cycleway network.
- 6.347. Increased provision and better conditions for pedestrians and cyclists, linked to locational policies which promote local activity, could lead to a significant change in travel choices. Such provision should make areas and development safer and more attractive to pedestrians and cyclists. Options include traffic calming, environmental improvements, improved lighting, provision of wider pavements and cycle tracks, narrower carriageways and friendly road crossings which avoid long detours, long waits or underpasses.

6.348. Policy TRANS6

All new residential, commercial and industrial developments, highway and traffic management schemes must provide for the safe and convenient passage of pedestrians and cyclists wherever such movements may be expected. The environment must be designed to be attractive for such use.

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6.349. New development must not erode the density or convenience of the pedestrian or cycle network but should aid in providing a more continuous system of routes. New routes should follow pedestrian and cycle desire lines with minimum disruption by vehicular traffic routes.

6.350. Policy TRANS7

Planning permission will not be granted for any development which prevents the use of any part of the cycle or pedestrian networks or Rights of Way, unless safe alternative routes can be provided which are similar in route and length.

6.351. Longer distance trailways have been created or are proposed in the District. In some cases these follow former railway lines. These are an important local resource both as part of the cycle network and for countryside recreation and should be protected from crossings by traffic routes which would break their continuity and reduce their value as routes safe from motor vehicles.

6.352. Policy TRANS8

Developments which would substantially disrupt the continuity of longer distance trailways as a segregated route for pedestrians, horseriders and cyclists will not be permitted.

Traffic Management and Pedestrian Priority

Pedestrians

6.353. Pedestrianisation and pedestrian priority schemes will be considered:

- in town centres; or
- along particular lengths of road that experience high levels of pedestrian activity; or
- where environmental conditions could be substantially improved; or
- where pedestrian movement is at present deterred by the intimidatory effects of vehicular traffic and increased pedestrian use could be expected as a result of its absence or regulation.

Such schemes will respect a human rather than a vehicular scale, providing for easier and more extensive pedestrian and cycle movement, in a safer and environmentally enhanced area.

6.354. To be successful such schemes require satisfactory provision to be made for local and through traffic, for public transport, servicing and parking, including the needs of those with a mobility impediment, and emergency vehicles.

6.355. *In residential areas, villages, town centres, shopping areas and lengths of road that experience high levels of pedestrian activity, or where there are potentially important pedestrian flows, traffic management measures will be introduced in appropriate locations to:*

- (a) *encourage more pedestrian travel;*
- (b) *reduce accidents;*
- (c) *reduce conflict between pedestrians and vehicles;*
- (d) *assist access for essential vehicular traffic;*
- (e) *encourage other traffic to use alternative routes; and*
- (f) *provide environmental benefits.*

Traffic Management Measures as Part of the Transport Strategy

- 6.356. Traffic management measures are an integral part of the transport strategy. They can often assist the transport network to provide the maximum benefit if they are designed to support and promote the use of appropriate routes. They will be introduced to encourage extraneous traffic onto the most suitable roads and away from areas where major conflict occurs between vehicles and pedestrians. They can help to create a better environment and can be tailored specifically to help bus operators.
- 6.357. *Traffic management schemes and direction signing will be designed to reinforce the road network policies and will take account of the needs of the local community and the areas economy. In particular, schemes will be introduced where it is necessary to remove extraneous traffic, reduce conflict between pedestrians and vehicles and to improve the environment.*
- 6.358. Where there are specific proposals included in this Plan, these appear in the detailed 'Local Area' chapters.
- 6.359. Localised traffic problems, involving congestion, accidents or excessive speed, may arise during the life of the Local Plan. It is considered prudent for the Plan to acknowledge that the Highway Authority will, from time to time, review the operation and effectiveness of highway junctions and the links between them. Any corrective action thought necessary will be taken through the traffic regulation process if the solution is confined to the utilisation of land wholly within the existing highway and has no implications for other land uses, nor has any adverse impact on the general transport policies of the Plan.

Traffic Calming

- 6.360. Traffic calming has a key role to play in ensuring that a safe and equitable balance between the various road users is maintained. Accident reduction will continue to be the first priority for traffic calming schemes funded by the Local Highway Authority and each proposal will be assessed using the Highway Authority's 'traffic calming criteria', set out in the Transport Policies and Programme.
- 6.361. By reducing to a minimum the lengths of roads on which speeds can build up, and by introducing such measures as curving road alignments, priority measures at junctions, raised platforms, road narrowings and the use of paving materials and planting, the layout of residential areas and new school developments will be designed to calm traffic. The traffic calming measure to be introduced will depend on site circumstances and each new site will need to be individually assessed.
- 6.362. *The road layout of residential areas will be designed to control vehicle speeds and promote traffic calming.*
- 6.363. Increasing use of private cars to take pupils to and from school is posing two major problems in relation to highway safety. Increased parking is leading to congestion in the immediate vicinity of the school and there is greater conflict between the movements of vehicles and pedestrians. Traffic management measures can be used to ensure safe access and movement for pupils, staff and visitors in the vicinity of the school.
- 6.364. *New school developments will incorporate facilities to ensure that traffic is calmed around the immediate vicinity of the school to ensure safety on the highway and safe access to the site from the adjoining highway.*

Heavy Goods Vehicles

- 6.365. The operation and efficiency of freight transport must be taken into account when considering policies to help reduce the impact of heavy goods vehicles on the

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environment. In order to reduce the effects of heavy goods vehicles on other road users, residents and property it is essential that such vehicles are directed on to the roads capable of handling them. To this end the Structure Plan has designated the Strategic Road network for advisory lorry routes. In addition to using these strategic routes heavy goods vehicles will also need to use other roads to gain access to local commercial, industrial and other premises. However, it will be desirable for heavy goods vehicles to be directed away from unsuitable areas and roads where through movements are unnecessary and are damaging to the environment and other road users.

- 6.366. *Schemes to restrict commercial vehicle through traffic on narrow rural roads and Conservation Areas will be introduced provided that suitable alternative routes exist, and that the additional transport costs are not unreasonable.*

Public Transport

- 6.367. Attractive public transport benefits passengers, and can also help to restrain the increase in car traffic. Conventional bus services are the main public transport mode and are very significant for shopping journeys to town centres, and for journeys by school children.
- 6.368. Many people in the Local Plan area do not have the use of a private car for all of their journeys, and other sections of the community never have access to private transport. For these people it is essential that an adequate, efficient and reliable public transport network is provided.
- 6.369. *The Local Authorities will aim to maintain a public transport service providing travel standards similar to those existing and where possible, standards will be improved.*
- 6.370. *The Local Authorities will aim to secure by subsidy any bus services not provided by the free market but considered appropriate to meet the needs of the community.*
- 6.371. *The Local Planning Authority will give priority to services between towns and their dependent settlements and to 'lifeline' services to rural villages.*
- 6.372. To encourage the use of bus services to and from major new residential, commercial and industrial areas it is essential that the services are introduced during the early stages of their development. To encourage operators to provide new bus services or redirect existing services into these areas, it is essential that the principal estate roads are designed to accommodate buses. Where possible, bus services will be encouraged at an early stage in the development of new areas.

6.373. Policy TRANS9

Where new residential, commercial or industrial estate distributor roads are proposed, these will only be permitted where they are designed or incorporate measures that allow for the safe and efficient movement of bus services.

- 6.374. It is central government policy to encourage unconventional forms of public transport to meet the needs of the public. Such services are not confined to rural areas and self help transport schemes are encouraged in all communities. When passenger demand is low more emphasis will be placed on the provision of unconventional transport.
- 6.375. *Where appropriate, community-managed and other innovative public transport services will be encouraged. It is important that community-managed services should not compete with commercial bus services to any significant extent. Care is needed to ensure a complementary role and provision of overall benefits to the community.*

Parking Facilities

6.376. Car parking policies are a vital link in the process of moving towards sustainable development through integrating land use and transport policies. This overall message comes through in planning policy guidance (PPG6 and PPG13). The basic tenet of this approach is that car parking provided with new development should be limited to the minimum necessary space for the operation of that development. Car parking provision over and above operational requirements should be determined having given consideration to the level of accessibility by modes other than private car whilst making adequate provision for residents or short staying parking requirements, whilst reducing the provision made for long stay commuter based parking.

6.377. Reduced requirements for parking may be justified in the following circumstances:

- where services are easily accessible by walking, cycling or public transport;
- where occupancy is restricted to the elderly, students or other groups where demand for parking may be less;
- availability of public car parking or where opportunity for shared use exists.

6.378. Policy TRANS10

The level of parking to be provided should reflect the need to promote sustainable travel choices and reduce reliance upon the car. Parking should not be provided above the maximum figures set out in the guidelines in Appendix B and should generally be the minimum necessary to serve the development and to prevent unacceptable levels of on-street parking.

6.379. There is an ever increasing demand for additional town-centre, off-street car parking and the economic benefits that extra provision can bring. This however, not only needs to be balanced with the scarce resources available, but also with the problems of accommodating additional car parks in tightly-knit historic areas.

6.380. In order to support the vitality and viability of town centres, preference will be given to the needs of shoppers in town centre car parks through management and pricing policy to give priority for visitors and shoppers whilst discouraging long-term parking for commuters.

6.381. Policy TRANS11

Town centre car parks will only be allowed where they are designed and operated for the benefit of shoppers.

6.382. The supply or pricing of car parking is a potential tool for influencing travel choices. Advice suggests that the level of vehicle parking to be provided as part of any development needs to be no higher than that which is essential for development to function, with the least use of the private car, without impediment to the local environment and the essential users of the highway in the vicinity of the development. It is also recognised that for some disabled people there is no substitute for the private car. The need for parking facilities for those people with a mobility impediment will necessarily form part of the essential parking at any location and will be designated accordingly.

6.383. Policy TRANS12

Where car parks are to be provided, they must make provision for use by the disabled.

Servicing

6.384. The loading and unloading of goods across footways in the main streets can create traffic problems and can be inconvenient and present a danger to pedestrians. When redevelopment takes place in the commercial centres of towns, as identified on the Proposals Map, rear servicing and parking facilities may be required. It is recognised, however, that in some circumstances such as Conservation Areas and areas of environmental sensitivity, the provision of off- street servicing may not be possible, and this may constitute a reason for refusing permission for the development.

6.385. Policy TRANS13

Development will not be permitted where servicing from the street would cause significant obstruction or danger to vehicular or pedestrian traffic.

Development Obligations

6.386. Where new development is likely to affect the existing movement of traffic in the vicinity, to attract large volumes of additional traffic or to produce conflicting traffic movements, the local highway authority will require appropriate highway improvements and/or traffic management measures to be undertaken through developer contributions.

6.387. Policy TRANS14

Where new development will have an impact on transportation links for which existing infrastructure is inadequate, developer contributions will be sought to the whole or part of the cost of providing or improving sustainable transport facilities which are fairly and reasonably related to the development.

Section 5 Previous Proposals

6.388. The allocations of land for development, redevelopment or change of use in previous plans are withdrawn and are superseded by the policies and proposals of this Plan.