



Six main neighbourhoods have been identified through this study.

- Fairmile and Jumpers Common
- Christchurch Town Centre
- Purewell, Stanpit, Mudeford and Friars Cliff
- Somerford
- Highcliffe and Walkford
- Burton

**5.2.2** The location of these neighbourhood areas is illustrated in **Figure 5.2**. Each of these areas has a mix of different aged development and local variations in housing styles and layouts. All the neighbourhoods can be subdivided into character areas (generally 4-5 character areas to each neighbourhood). It is a Borough-wide characteristic that very few character areas contain only one era of development.

### Sense of Place and Identity

**5.2.3** The expansion of the built up area has not left a settlement devoid of interest or character. Although there are substantial areas of standard house layouts or common house styles most areas are well maintained and very presentable. The relatively high residential values and high proportion of retirement population ensure few properties are allowed to deteriorate. It is also evident that the planning authority and developers have successfully managed the retention of trees and good standards of design on many key sites. In several instances it is clear that very standard housing layouts have been saved by a strong landscape setting of trees or other green space features. This success has ensured that, at the most basic level, the individual housing areas within the Borough provide at least a pleasant residential environment. Within all the neighbourhoods there is at least one, or one part of, a character area that stands out as having a dominant sense of place or character. These are often related to areas where the historic pattern remains, older residential estates have developed mature tree cover or where the natural settings of landscape and coast define the townscape character. Some of the distinctive sections of townscape are contained within the residential areas. These provide an enhanced setting for those individual areas. Others lie alongside key circulation routes and thereby contribute to a wider sense of place.

**5.2.4** The status of Christchurch as a separate borough outside the Bournemouth conurbation is a reflection of the historical development as a separate entity. Aspects of the physical landscape and the local townscape help reinforce this separate identity.

**5.2.5** Christchurch is known for a number of key features. Its ancient Priory, historic town, the Avon Valley, the river, harbour and beaches. Individually these elements are special, when seen combined they help create a unique sense of place.

**5.2.6** The detailed assessment of the neighbourhoods and character areas are set out in the following sections. In this the contribution each area makes to the local environment, general sense of place and unique identity of Christchurch is explained.

### Sensitivity to Change and Capacity for Development

**5.2.7** Urban areas are dynamic. There is a need to accommodate change as part of a viable economy and functional townscape. Individual properties need periodic updating and changing, social needs can create pressure for extensions and conversions. Within the Borough there is pressure for housing land, sustainable objectives promote the re-use of urban land and increased housing densities to help reduce pressure on Greenfield land. Such changes can impact on the character and quality of the townscapes.

**5.2.8** Loss of open land within the urban areas may have direct impacts on the general setting and green space provision of an area. Small scale changes to either individual properties or within local neighbourhoods can also have a cumulative impact on the characteristic building patterns or styles that would disrupt the wider sense of place.

**5.2.9** In looking at each character area consideration has been given to the sensitivity of the area to the different types of potential change.

**5.2.10** At the end of the assessment section for each neighbourhood this is drawn together into a summary of the capacity of that area to accommodate further developments.

### Link to the Town Centre Strategy

**5.2.11** The Character Assessment work for this document has been undertaken in conjunction with the development of a strategy for the Town Centre. The two projects have been developed in tandem with the findings of the Character Assessment and Capacity Assessments for the Town Centre, helping to guide the proposed strategy.

