



7.0 Summary & Conclusions



7.0 Summary and Conclusions

7.1 Environmental Quality and Sense of Place

7.1.1 The objectives set for this study included the need to:

- Obtain a comprehensive understanding of the quality, diversity and sensitivity of the Borough's environmental character by reference to "character areas" and,
- Identify the most important borough-wide characteristics that contribute to the borough's unique and distinctive character, sense of place and identity.

7.1.2 From the assessment undertaken, it is clear that these objectives need to be considered on two levels.

7.1.3 The extensive residential areas within the Borough are the environments local residents use on an everyday basis. Many of these do not fall within any special designations or protected areas. Yet these areas are often subject to the greatest pressures for change and are sensitive in terms of the general residential amenity currently provided. The sheer extent of these residential neighbourhoods also means they are an integral part of any comprehensive understanding of the borough. While predominately post war developments, there are many areas that present very pleasant and locally distinctive residential environments.

7.1.4 Balanced against this is the wider perception gained by visitors

to the Borough. The unique combination of attractive natural (and made-made) environments is an essential part of the visitor interest within the Borough. An understanding of what makes Christchurch special will assist with the protection and management of its environment.

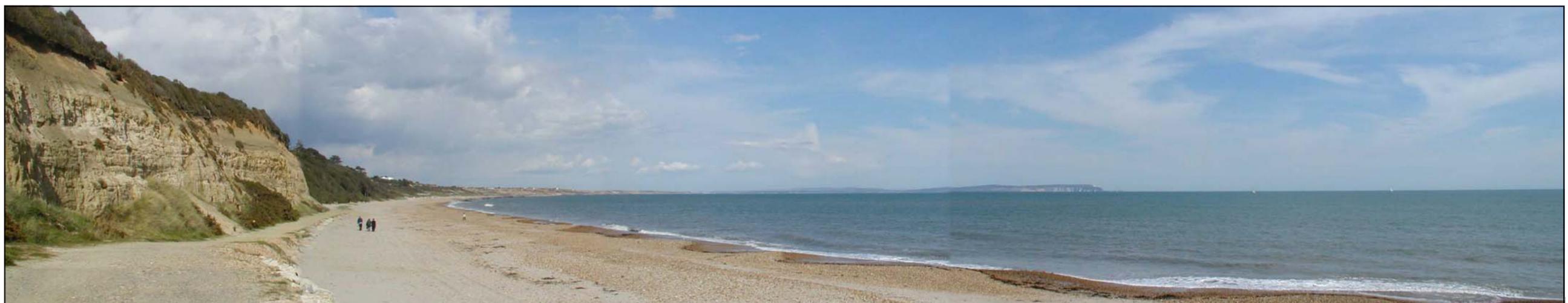
7.1.5 The difference between these two strands lies in the point that few residential areas within the Borough are inviting or attractive to general visitors and that, in some locations, property ownerships, or residential land uses exclude visitors from some key environmental assets.

7.1.6 The Borough contains an impressive range of high quality environmental assets, listed buildings, ancient monuments, nature reserves, open spaces, groups and individual trees. All such features are a resource even if not publicly visible. Where found as individual elements within a street scene or neighbourhood, such elements can lift the general condition of the environment. Where such features become part of a wide repeating pattern as a characteristic this can be seen as distinctive character.

7.1.7 Where this character is openly accessible then these areas help define a wider identity for the Borough.

7.1.8 To be seen as of special status amongst the range of historic towns and high quality landscapes of Britain there needs to be more than collections of well preserved buildings or designated habitats. The degree to which such high quality assets are seen to be set within characteristic settings is important. Where special character areas are interrelated and contagious with one another also has a bearing on the sense of the unique or special environment.

7.1.9 As a whole the Borough contains very few poor quality





environments. Within the countryside the presence of various elements of transport or urban infrastructure have a direct adverse impact on their immediate settings. But the most significant impacts are often contained within a narrow corridor or immediate confines of the developments. There is no real ‘urban fringe’ landscape, despite the fact the Borough adjoins a major conurbation. The proximity of urban influences ensures only limited parts of the borough can be appreciated as remote or truly unspoilt, conversely the built up areas enjoy the benefit of a generally continuous countryside edge or wider setting.

7.1.10 The Landscape Character Areas Map (**Figure 7.1**) illustrates the diversity of the rural landscapes of the Borough. For a relatively small administrative area, these provide a wide range of landscapes in close proximity. This gives the Borough an interesting, relatively complex rural setting. It is noted the various landscapes within the Borough are extensions of wider landscape character areas found to the north and west. There is a continuity of landscape up the Avon Valley towards Ringwood and up to the urban area of Bournemouth and Ferndown to the west. The landscapes also provide a distinct contrast and separation to the distinctly different landscapes of the New Forest within Hampshire to the east.



7.1.11 While this diversity of rural landscape is an asset to the Borough, it also means there is no one distinctive rural character that identifies the Borough as a whole. It is also relevant to note the difficulty that occurs in making any comprehensive recreational use east/west across the Borough due to the lack of routes across the Avon river, the flood plains and major roads.

7.1.12 Within the built up area there are extensive areas of suburban post war housing. Some of this has become over-developed and unstructured. But few areas are degraded or inhospitable. There are also localised pockets of poor quality or intrusive non-residential developments.



7.1.13 The majority of the built up area is comprised of well maintained, presentable often pleasant environments. The predominance of residential development and heavily trafficked through routes create a general backdrop of 20th Century suburban townscape. This is in effect a part of the Borough identity.

7.1.14 This backdrop is the everyday townscape. **Figure 7.2** illustrates an overlay of the residential areas mapped to highlight those areas with special or good quality environments.

7.1.15 As a separate exercise **Figure 7.3** illustrates the distribution of

the more unique assets and character areas of the townscape. These encompass the historic core of the main town, and wider settings of landscape and harbour. The publicly accessible Conservation Areas and distinctive green spaces are highlighted. From this exercise the relationship of historic town, its setting, the harbour, Mudeford and Christchurch Bay can be seen as continuous and interrelated. While each element is important in its own right there is a greater value in these areas when seen as a whole.

7.1.16 While there is a continuity of good quality interesting landscapes/townscapes around the harbour, Town Centre, Mudeford and out along the coastline, these areas are not very well connected by attractive routeways. In terms of visitors to the Borough, these areas may often be only experienced individually as the connections between the areas are not always very obvious or convenient. The general massing of some parts of the suburban townscape between key routes and these important areas may also diminish the perception of the special identity of the Borough.

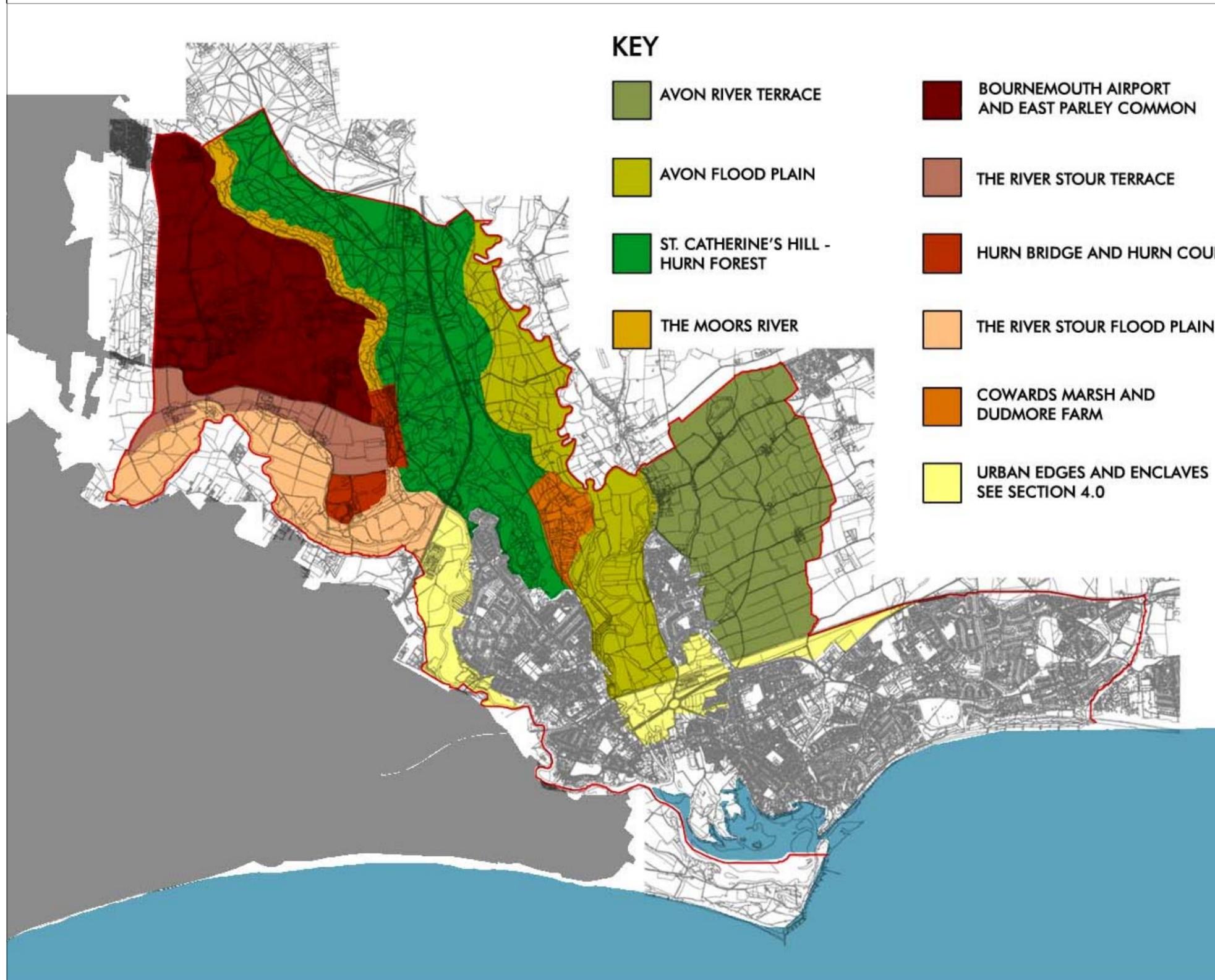
7.2 Capacity for Change

7.2.1 Landscapes and townscapes are dynamic. The bulk of the rural countryside within the Borough are ‘modern’ parliamentary enclosures. Much of the built up area is even more recent. While such change has been accepted the continued and evolving demands in both town and country are often increasingly difficult to balance.

7.2.2 As a small borough with a significant urban area the countryside within Christchurch is a distinctly finite resource. None of the landscape has been recognised as of high intrinsic quality prior to the current proposal to designate some of the Borough as part of the New Forest National Park. If accepted the designation would imply the quality of at least that part of the Borough was of outstanding status on a national scale. The eastern half of the Borough, that area within the proposed national park, is the area least compromised by development. As an open landscape this area is sensitive to visual intrusion or additional built development.

7.2.3 The heathlands and pine woodlands within the central section of the Borough are important as recreational and natural habitat areas. These again would be sensitive to development pressure.

7.2.4 The remaining western portion of the rural landscape has



Rural Character Areas map taken from Section 3.0 illustrates the diversity of rural landscape types found across the Borough. The urban edges and enclaves generally have similar characteristics to the adjoining wider countryside, but are often of weaker character, but generally form important settings to the town (in this respect these areas are of no lesser value than the more open and unspoilt countryside of the Borough.)

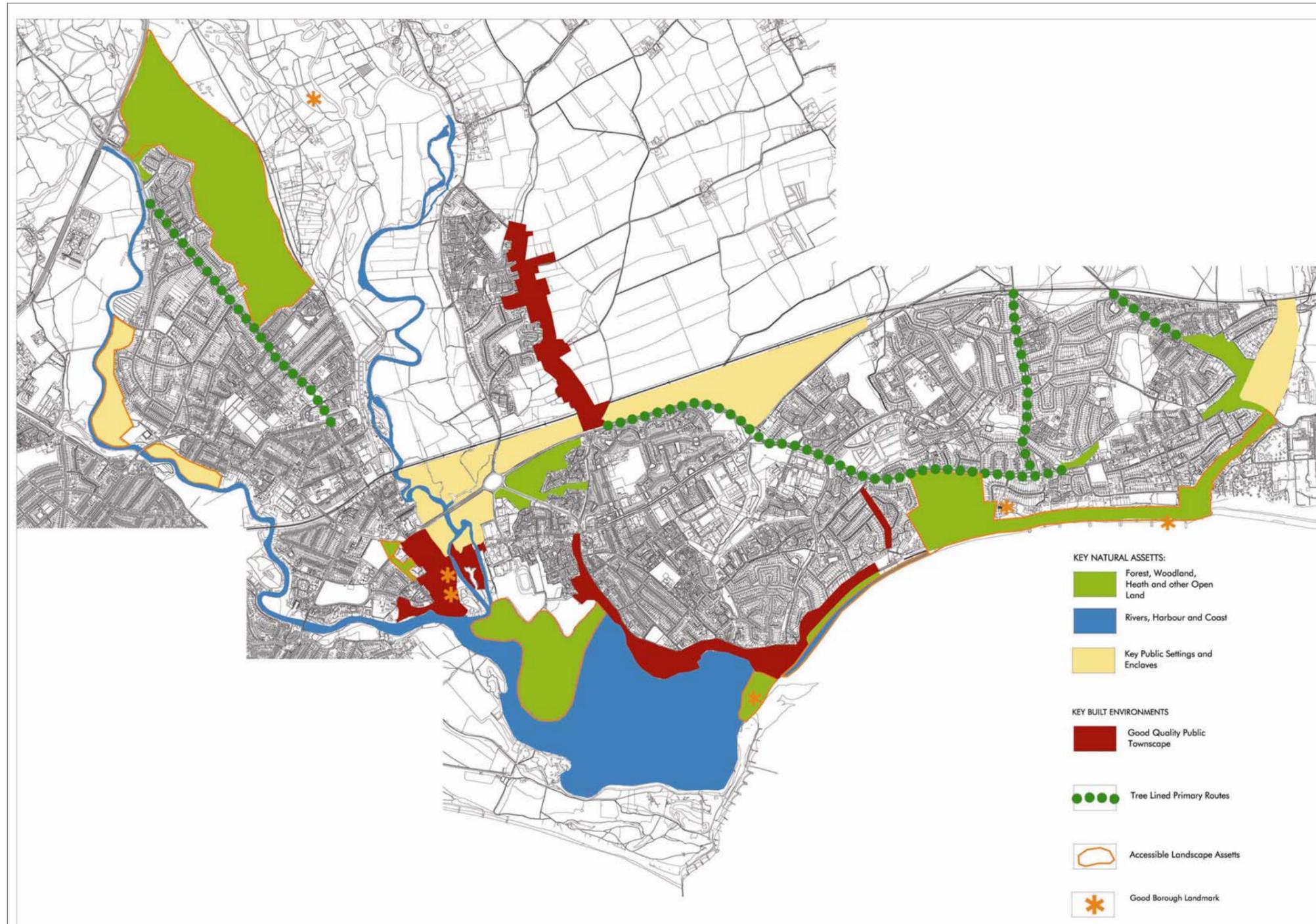
Figure 7.2 relates to the character areas of the built-up area.

Figure 7.1 - Rural Landscape Character Areas



Figure 7.2 - Residential Areas Summary





This figure illustrates the general distribution of the key assets and areas within the built-up setting of the Borough. This focuses on those areas that are currently visible or accessible to visitors to the Borough, and highlights the elements which may be seen to contribute to the wider perceived identity of the Borough. As noted elsewhere the individual sections of street-scape identified within different sections to the built-up area are important elements. These are often set within wider areas of mixed townscape as indicated by the ‘good quality townscape’ areas identified on this figure.

The one main section of streetscape through Highcliffe, while important locally, is not identified here as good quality public townscape.

Figure 7.3 - Summary of Key Assets and Areas



already absorbed an expanded airport and its related business park, together with other development. This area again should be seen as highly sensitive to further change that erodes the rural characteristics of the remaining landscape on the edge of the conurbation.

7.2.5 These rural landscapes extend up to the edge of the built up area. Key areas provide a rural setting to the edge of the town. Development within these key edge areas would directly conflict with the identity of Christchurch as a mixed rural and urban environment.

7.2.6 The urban area has developed out to clear physical boundaries. Considerable infill has occurred both within the older residential areas and by redevelopment of non-residential sites. The extent of existing infill and the overwhelming dominance of housing has left the townscape character generally sensitive to further increases in residential development.



7.2.7 The different sections of the townscape are sensitive to a range of potential effects. Loss of trees or green space are general Borough-wide issues. Some specific sections of townscape would be sensitive to cramming through further infill or increased densities. Often the continuity of older housing areas is becoming jumbled by infill development of different styles and eras. A number of very unified estate developments would be sensitive to development changes that disrupt the strong patterns of standard house designs. Within the more historic areas development that erodes the historic fabric would have implications for the character of such areas.

7.2.8 The need to accommodate increased housing densities may be met in some urban areas through redevelopment of older housing stock. Within Christchurch this appears to be a limited prospect as many areas contain well-maintained high value properties. In addition the general pattern of low rise bungalow developments also suggest it may often be difficult to integrate new developments of radically higher density.



7.2.9 Despite the general sensitivities there are areas even within the historic town centre where carefully controlled well designed development could be accommodated. Some of these relate to parts of the built up area where inappropriate or intrusive development sit within the older townscape structure. Reference to some of the older development patterns could in fact lead the way to more intensive but responsive residential developments.

7.3 Policy Implications

7.3.1 Many of the individual environmental assets of the Borough are effectively protected by designation or statutory protection. This in most instances ensures direct effects are strictly controlled. There is greater difficulty in giving appropriate protection to the more elusive aspects of character or settings, which provide the background to the general environment of the area. It is envisaged this document will assist in this by providing clear definition of the character of the Borough.

7.3.2 In addition to this study the authority have developed a selection of detailed management plans for many of the key nature conservation / open space sites and the coastline. These will help direct change or pressures on these areas to best effect.

7.3.3 From the process of this character study a number of points have arisen that relate to formal planning policies. These are summarised as follows;

7.4 Countryside

Rural Landscapes

7.4.1 The rural landscapes of the Borough have been effectively protected by Green Belt designation. While this restricts development it does not explicitly relate to the character of the countryside. It is suggested a countryside character policy could assist the Borough with the protection of the rural landscapes.

Green Belt

7.4.2 The rural landscapes extend right up to the edge of the built up area. In many locations these areas help define special settings or a positive landscape setting to the town. Release of any of the Green Belt in this area would lead to intense development pressure. Development within the urban edge areas would diminish the relationship between the town and countryside.

7.4.3 There may be scope to accommodate future development close to the village of Burton without direct impact on the general character of the existing expanded village or the setting of the wider built up area. This would however amount to Green Field development and would appear to conflict with the ESA designation. Furthermore, other opportunities appear to exist within the urban area. Development of such a green field site could only follow a sequential approach with priority given to Town Centre brownfield sites.

7.4.4 Substantial development at and around Bournemouth



International Airport is anticipated within existing adopted plans. Outside the allocated development area, the airport lies within the green belt. Some development is permissible within the green belt at Bournemouth International Airport subject to a case of exceptional circumstances being established. The scale and extent of future development within the Green Belt on the southern side of the airport will directly determine the degree to which the area between Hurn Forest and the conurbation is perceived as being open. The importance of protecting this open condition and the national, regional and local implications of future growth of the airport will be important factors in the future review of the Green Belt boundary.

Rural Conservation Areas

7.4.5 The various Conservation Areas designated around the outlying villages help protect the built environment and character of the rural landscape. These need to be maintained as a means to protecting the setting and condition of the historic building groups. In view of the proximity of a number of other historic structures or buildings around Winkton, Hurn and Parley Green consideration should be given to the benefit of minor extension to the areas protected by Conservation Area Status.



The Stour Corridor

7.4.6 The River Stour provides a clear physical boundary between Christchurch and Bournemouth. The river is not the administrative boundary at all points but the river corridor helps define Christchurch Borough as a separate entity from the Bournemouth Conurbation. It is however an area that is relatively secluded and overlooked as an asset within the Borough. The area offers significant potential for reinforcing the identity of Christchurch and is of immense recreational value on the edge of the urban areas. It is suggested the significance of the river corridor could be furthered by the development of a River Stour Corridor Management Plan. This may need to be a joint exercise carried out in conjunction with Bournemouth Borough Council and would seek to enhance the status and accessibility of the area.

7.4.7 Specific policies providing protection to the rural landscape are set out below:

New Development In and Around the Countryside, including landscape



character areas, urban edges and enclaves, coastal and inter-tidal areas

Policy Aim

To preserve and enhance the unique characteristics of the Borough's rural landscapes.

Policy Application

Development in or around the Countryside, Rural Landscapes, Urban Edges and Enclaves, Coastal and Inter-tidal Areas.

Policy Derivation

East Cambridgeshire Local Plan. Better local Plans – A Guide to Writing Effective Policies, Planning Officers Society, 1997.

Cap 5 New development in and around the countryside, including landscape character areas, urban edges and enclaves, coastal and inter-tidal areas.

New development in and around the countryside, as described above, will be controlled to ensure that it is assimilated into its setting and preserves local landscape and or townscape character. Within landscape and other character areas, the council will seek to protect the specific features or qualities that help define their character. New development will be assessed, taking into account the other policies contained within this guidance, local plan and national planning policies. Furthermore, the council will pay particular regard to:

- The preservation of existing informal, rural and countryside type land-uses.
- Minimising any adverse environmental impacts on or around the area.
- Maintaining important views from nearby settlements, highways and rights of way.
- Whether the siting, scaling, massing, height and proportions of nearby buildings are reflected in that proposed.
- Whether the proposed development is / can be clustered in and around existing development.

Residential development in and around the countryside, as described above, will only be permitted where it involves:

- The conversion and retention of a listed or locally important building.
- The replacement of an existing habitable dwelling (see below).
- The provision of an agricultural dwelling.

The replacement of an existing habitable dwelling will be permitted if:

- The present dwelling has a lawful residential use and furthermore, is not the result of a temporary planning permission.
- The size of the new dwelling is similar to that of the dwelling being replaced.
- The new dwelling is of a design which is sympathetic in scale, mass, materials and architectural details to the vernacular character of dwellings in the locality.
- The new dwelling is sited to preclude the retention of the original dwelling or there is a condition or planning agreement to ensure the demolition of the latter on completion of the new.
- The new dwelling is no more visually intrusive than the original.

Development involving the re-use or adaption of existing agricultural and other rural buildings for new uses will be permitted if the nature and extent of the proposed uses are acceptable and having regard to other policies of this guidance, local plan and national planning policies; and furthermore:

- The existing building is of substantial, sound and permanent construction.
- The new use to be introduced would not lead to the dispersal of activity on such a scale as to prejudice the vitality of nearby towns or villages.
- Whether the form, bulk and design of the new building(s) are in keeping with their surroundings and reflect local building styles and materials.
- Whether the buildings are capable of conversion without extensive alteration, rebuilding or extension.
- Whether the buildings have been in recent and regular use for a significant period of time.
- There is sufficient room within the curtilage to park vehicles for those who work at or visit the site and or for servicing.
- The traffic generated by the new use can be safely accommodated by the site access and local road system.

Development within Conservation Areas, Special Character Areas,



- All ancillary works such as parking, servicing and access can be accommodated without detriment to the visual amenity of the countryside; and furthermore, no new fences, walls or other structures associated with the use will be erected that would harm the visual amenity of the countryside.

New advertisements in the countryside will be restricted to those that are essential for directional purposes and which are appropriate to their surroundings in size, scale, design, use of materials and lighting.

The council will work with the relevant utilities to ensure that new routes for overhead power lines and their associated plant avoid areas of significant landscape and townscape importance and are placed underground wherever possible.

Relevant Local Plan Policies:

Policy BE 1-BE 5, H13-15, L1-L19 and ENV 7-22 of the Christchurch Local Plan.

Recreational Uses in the Countryside, including Landscape Character Areas, Urban Edges and Enclaves, Coastal and Inter-tidal areas.

Policy Aim

To preserve and enhance the unique characteristics of the Borough's Rural Landscapes, Edges and Enclaves, Coastal and Inter-tidal Areas.

Policy Application

Development in and around the Countryside, Rural Landscapes, Urban Edges and Enclaves, Coastal and Inter-tidal Areas.

Policy Derivation

Better Local Plans – A Guide to Writing Effective Policies, Planning Officers Society, 1997.

Cap 6 Recreational Uses in the Countryside, including Landscape Character Areas, Urban Edges and Enclaves, Coastal and Inter-tidal Areas.

Development for a recreational use in the countryside, as described above, will be permitted if:

- There would be no harm to the value of the environmental characteristics and resources of the site and its surroundings.
- Harm would not be caused by the nature, scale, extent, frequency or timing of the recreational activities proposed, including:
 - Any noise or other forms of nuisance likely to be generated by the proposed activities.
 - The appearance of any building or other structure proposed.
 - The number of people likely to be at the site at any one time and their degree of concentration or dispersal within and around the site.
 - Whether any significant lighting would be required that would be detrimental to the character of the area and or the amenities of neighbouring residents.
- Harm would not be caused by the extent and visual impact of land-forming works including the formation of playing surfaces, terracing or mounding and the planting of trees.
- Harm would not be caused by the amount, siting, layout or landscape treatment proposed for car parking.
- The proposed vehicular access and exit would be safe and furthermore, the local road network could carry the extra traffic generated.
- Proposals do not prejudice existing or proposed public access to the countryside, as described above, riverside or coast and furthermore, do not prejudice coast protection works.

New facilities should use existing buildings where they are available. Any new buildings or structures should be sited close to existing buildings and blend into the landscape through design, siting, use of materials and landscaping.

Relevant Local Plan Policies

Policies L17, L18 and ENV 9 of the Christchurch Local Plan.

Static Caravans, Chalets or Cabins in the Countryside, including Landscape Character Areas, Urban Edges and Enclaves, Coastal and Inter-tidal areas.

Policy Aim: To preserve and enhance the unique characteristics of the Borough's Countryside, Rural Landscapes, Edges and Enclaves, Coastal and Inter-tidal Areas.

Policy Application: Development in and around the Countryside, Rural Landscapes, Urban Edges and Enclaves, Coastal and Inter-tidal Areas.

Policy Derivation: Better Local Plans – A Guide to Writing Effective Policies, Planning Officers Society, 1997.

Cap 7 Static Caravans, Chalets or Cabins in the Countryside, including Landscape Character Areas, Urban Edges and Enclaves, Coastal and Inter-tidal areas.

New static caravans, chalet or cabin development for holiday use, or the extension of an existing site, will not be permitted if it is likely to cause harm to the character, appearance or amenity of the countryside, urban edge or enclave, or a coastal or inter-tidal area. Where the principle of development is acceptable, such development will be permitted provided the following criteria are met:

- The site is well screened by land form or landscaping from highways, viewpoints and other public places and the development would not harm the character or appearance of the area either on its own or when taken together with other established or proposed static caravan, chalet or cabin developments in the vicinity.
- The scale of development relates sensitively to its surroundings and would blend into the landscape and townscape.
- The site is well laid out, designed and landscaped and the caravans, chalets or cabins would blend into the landscape and townscape through their setting, design, colour and use of materials.
- The site is in an area with local opportunities for informal recreation but would not itself harm such attractions.
- The development would not harm the character or setting of settlements or the amenities of local residents.
- The traffic generated could be safely accommodated on the local highway network.
- The site is not in an area liable to flooding.

Relevant Local Plan Policies : None

Camping and Touring Caravan Sites in the Countryside, including Landscape Character Areas, Urban Edges and Enclaves, Coastal and Inter-tidal areas.

Policy Aim: To preserve and enhance the unique characteristics of the Borough's Countryside, Rural Landscapes, Edges and Enclaves, Coastal and Inter-tidal Areas.

Policy Application: Development in and around the Countryside, Rural Landscapes, Urban Edges and Enclaves, Coastal and Inter-tidal Areas.

Policy Derivation: Better Local Plans – A Guide to Writing Effective Policies, Planning Officers Society, 1997.

Cap 8 Camping and Touring Caravan Sites in the Countryside, including Landscape Character Areas, Urban Edges and Enclaves, Coastal and Inter-tidal Areas.

Planning permission for the development of a camping or touring caravan site will be granted unless it:

- Would not relate sensitively in scale or siting to its surroundings and would harm the character, appearance or amenity of the countryside, urban edge or enclave, or a coastal or inter-tidal area, either on its own or when added to other established or proposed camping and touring caravan sites in the vicinity.
- Would harm the character or setting of a settlement or the amenities of adjoining residents.
- Would harm a site of importance for wildlife conservation or special scientific interest.
- Could not be provided with water or sewage disposal facilities.
- The traffic generated by the proposal could not be accommodated safely on the local highway network or the site has no safe means of access or exit.

Relevant local plan policies: Policy ET 3 of the Christchurch Local Plan.

The Built Up Areas

Settings

7.5.1 The distribution of protected townscape directly reflects the distribution of the historic (pre 20th C) development in the area. These areas are mostly protected by Conservation Area Status. The detailed review of the various areas and the preparation of the Conservation Area Character Statements is ongoing. The future value of these areas will depend on how the character and settings around and within these areas is controlled. In several locations it is evident that the physical fabric and the designated areas have been effectively controlled but the wider settings of listed buildings and the designated areas has not been so effectively protected. The definition of important settings and a wider view of the sensitivity of such areas could help the management of the Borough's historic townscape.

Special Character Areas

7.5.2 This study has identified a number of locations where the existing townscape has some form of special character. Many of these are in fact the conservation areas or open spaces around the built up areas. These areas often contribute to the wider perception of the Borough Character. In other locations they are the points within individual neighbourhoods that provide the local sense of place or amenity to that individual neighbourhood.

7.5.3 As areas often set within the general suburban expanse, they should be recognised as contributing to the quality of the townscape beyond the immediate locality of individual side streets or housing areas. Loss or erosion of the special character from these areas will diminish the overall quality of the local neighbourhoods.

7.5.4 The protection of the tree cover within the neighbourhoods is identified as a key issue in the protection of special character areas. Such protection should include consideration of the long-term growth of trees and potential conflicts and space required for regeneration of trees within the built up area.

7.5.5 Such areas should be protected through either local townscape character areas or more emphasis on how the characteristic elements of the Borough need to be protected in development proposals.

The General Townscape

7.5.6 With a predominance of residential development one of the main forms of change is through alteration or extension of the housing stock. In large parts of the Borough the existing mix of styles, house types and eras makes it difficult to be definitive on the forms of building alteration that would relate to surrounding character. To assist applicants for residential development or alterations the Borough have produced a Design Guide for such applications. The guidance will help maintain the continuity of housing design and thereby help protect the character of the overall townscape. The Design Guide has been adopted as Supplementary Planning Guidance.

Design and Quality of New Development, Local Distinctiveness and Sustainability

Policy Aim

To ensure high quality new development designed to preserve and enhance the distinctive landscape and townscape of Christchurch.

Policy Application

Development throughout the Borough.

Policy Derivation

Guildford Design Code, Westminster City Council, Policy DES 1, as exhibited in 'From Design Policy to Design Quality, Royal Town Planning Institute, 2002.

Cap 1 Design and Quality of New Development, Local Distinctiveness and Sustainability

A high standard of design and the use of appropriate durable, indigenous and recycled building materials is expected in all new development throughout the borough. New development will not be permitted unless:

A) It respects, protects and enhances the:

- Established townscape, urban grain and spatial layout, building lines, topography, landmarks, views and vistas within and around the area;
- Site coverage, density and plot sizes predominant within the area;
- Existing spaces of value around and between buildings and seeks to create new attractive spaces of identifiable character;
- Detailed design and treatment of surrounding buildings including roof-scape, scale, bulk, height, massing and hierarchy of surrounding buildings;
- Soft and hard landscaping including walls, enclosures and paving schemes found in the surrounding area and furthermore, retains and supplements important trees, shrubs and hedgerows;
- The form, character and ecological value of parks, gardens and open spaces within the area.

B) Retains gardens, incidental green spaces and gaps between buildings where these are important to the established character of the area.

C) Uses high quality durable and where possible, indigenous and recycled building materials appropriate to the development and its setting.

D) New buildings and spaces at pedestrian level provide visual interest and a sense of identity and place and furthermore, the proposed built layout will be easily understood by potential users and creates areas of identifiable character.





- E) It avoids causing harm to the neighbourhood and adjoining properties visual intrusion, loss of privacy, loss of light, noise and disturbance or pollution.
- F) It provides for safe and convenient access for all that will not cause or increase danger to pedestrians and road users and furthermore, increases permeability through residential areas;
- G) The traffic generated can be accommodated on surrounding roads without serious detriment to amenity, safety or traffic flow.
- H) It provides sufficient parking and space for servicing.
- I) Adopts design measures to reduce the opportunity for anti-social behaviour, crime and the fear of crime.
- J) Incorporate appropriately designed and positioned security measures on, in and around buildings and surrounding spaces, so as to minimise their visual impact;
- K) Maintains a clear distinction between private and public spaces around buildings and ensures informal surveillance of public space.
- L) It retains, does not adversely affect and where appropriate, enhances important landscape, natural, ecological, historical or architectural features.
- M) Existing local services and utilities have sufficient capacity, or may be programmed to have that capacity.
- N) It includes where appropriate an adequate provision of open space.

Note to applicants

Applicants should provide sufficient information including detailed and dimensioned plans to enable the council to judge the full impact of the development proposed. Applicants must demonstrate how they have taken into account (by use of drawings, photographs and written statements), the following:

- Architectural quality, local character and distinctiveness within the surrounding area.
- The location and nature of existing and potential vehicular and pedestrian routes to and through the site and to amenities and facilities beyond.
- Townscape features within and visible from the site and or the surrounding area.
- Local views through and within the site and landmark features visible in the vicinity of the site.
- Mobility and security measures.
- Waste storage and disposal.
- Sustainable construction principles in accordance with the council's sustainable construction protocol.
- Regard to national, strategic and local policies that provide guidance on development quality and design.

It should be noted that special impact studies or environmental assessments may be required, dependent upon the location, scale and nature of the development proposed and its potential impact upon the surrounding area..

Relevant local plan policies: Policies BE 1, BE 4, BE 5, BE14, BE 15, BE 16, BE 19, H 12, H14, H 16 and ENV 21 of the Christchurch Local Plan.

Residential Density

Policy Aim

To apply the guidance of PPG 3 within the context of local Residential Development Characteristics, as identified in this Character Assessment.

Policy Application

Residential development throughout the Borough.

Policy Derivation

London Borough of Camden, Policy HG 10, as exhibited in 'From Design Policy to Design Quality, Royal Town Planning Institute, 2002.

Cap 2 Residential Density

Planning permission will not be granted for residential development unless its density reflects:

1. The character of the site including the presence of landscape features and other features of interest;
2. The character of the surrounding area and its development.

Furthermore, while the Council is cognizant of government advice that the inefficient use of land should be avoided, by encouraging residential densities of between 30 – 50 dwellings per hectare (net) and higher densities at sites with good public transport accessibility, the Council will determine whether higher or lower densities would be appropriate by taking the following into account:

- Paragraphs 13 – 20 and Annex A of PPG 1 (general policies and principles), paragraphs 52 – 56 of PPG3 (housing) and paragraphs 2.12 – 2.16 and 5.13 – 5.17 of PPG 15 (planning and the historic environment).
- The residential development characteristics of each area identified, where the need for compatibility with the existing character of the area together with the scale and nature of surrounding development dictates a higher or lower density.
- Where higher or lower densities would enhance the qualities of borough, neighbourhood or streetscape landmarks or their settings, views and vistas, gateways and key tree groups.
- The provision, availability and accessibility of social and community infrastructure such as leisure and recreation facilities, and open space etc.
- The need to accommodate adequate car parking within the site, related to the needs of prospective occupiers together with the provision, availability and accessibility of alternative off-site parking facilities, such as public car parks.
- Whether the development or parts thereof is targeted for the occupation by those with special needs including housing need.
- Whether the site is within or otherwise affects the setting of a conservation area, a special character area, a streetscape area or an area of good quality public townscape, the characteristics of which dictates a higher or lower density.

For guidance:

The Borough Character Assessment provides guidance on indicative residential densities within particular neighbourhoods. In broad terms, residential densities within the built up area range between 5 (e.g. parts of Friars Cliff) and 30 - 40 dwellings per hectare (e.g. parts of Barrack Road and Bargates). The majority of residential densities throughout the built up area range between 15 – 20 dwellings per hectare. The following neighbourhood densities have been identified:

30 - 40 Dwellings Per Hectare	Bargates and Avon Buildings.
25 - 30 Dwellings Per Hectare	Barrack Road; Newer Estates of Purewell; Safron Way; Burton Village (North).
20 - 25 Dwellings Per Hectare	Parts of Chewton Common; parts of Wharncliffe – Walkford Brook; parts of Bure Lane - Somerford.
15 - 20 Dwellings Per Hectare	Parts of Wickfield Ave; Stanpit; Somerford; Hoburne Lane – Hurstbourne Ave; parts of Bure Lane – Somerford.
10 - 15 Dwellings Per Hectare	Canberra Rd; St. Catherine's Hill; Marsh Lane; parts of Friars Cliff; Breamar Drive/ Greenways; parts Of Wharncliffe – Walkford Brook; Burton Village (South); parts of Chewton Common.
5 - 10 Dwellings Per Hectare	The Grove; parts of Wickfield Av.; parts of Friars Cliff; Hinton Wood Avenue.

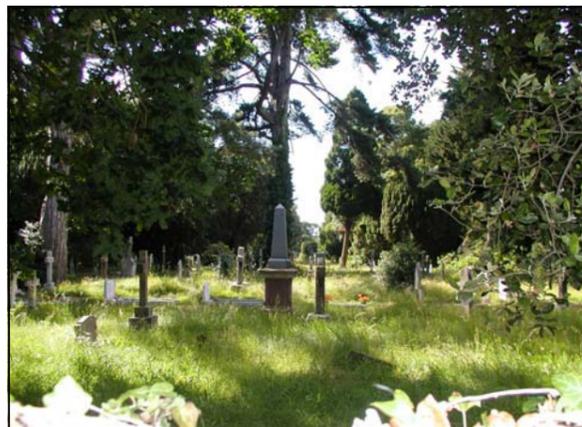
Note To Applicants:

The Council will expect applicants to clearly show the density of development proposed (dwellings per hectare) and provide a reasoned justification, in design terms, where this departs from that characteristic of the area.

Relevant Local Plan Policies:

Policies BE1, BE 4, BE 5, BE 15, BE 16, H 12, H 16, ENV 9, ENV 20 And ENV 21 of the Christchurch Local Plan.





Streetscape Areas and Areas of Good Quality Public Townscape.

Policy Aim

To ensure that new development preserves and enhances the distinctive characteristics of Conservation Areas, Special Character Areas, Streetscape Areas and Areas of Good Quality Public Townscape, that contributes towards the Borough's sense of identity and place.

Policy Application

Development in and around Conservation Areas, Special Character Areas and Areas of Streetscape and Public Townscape importance, including:

- The Grove Special Character Area.
- The Town Centre Special Character Area together with the High Street, Bridge Street and Castle Street Streetscape Areas.
- The Bargates and Avon Buildings Special Character Area.
- The Purewell, Stanpit and Mudeford Special Character Areas and the Stanpit / Mudeford Streetscape Area.
- The Seaway Avenue Special Character Area.
- The Lymington Road Streetscape Area.
- The Special Character Areas of Highcliffe Castle, the Golf Club, the Cliff Top, Hinton Wood Avenue and Chewton Common.
- Burton Special Character Area.
- All Conservation Areas, as identified in the Local Plan.

Policy Derivation

London Borough of Richmond, Policy ENV 3, London Borough of Haringey, Policy DES 2.2, as exhibited in 'From Design Policy to Design Quality, Royal Town Planning Institute, 2002. Better Local Plans – A Guide to Effective Policies, Planning Officers Society, 1997.

Cap 3 Development Affecting Conservation Areas, Special Character Areas, Streetscape Areas And Areas of Good Quality Public Townscape

The council will seek to preserve and enhance the character and appearance of conservation areas, special character areas, streetscape areas and areas of good quality public townscape and will refuse development proposals within, adjacent or affecting such areas that are considered to be detrimental to the appearance, character or setting of that area. In consequence, the council will:

- Refuse applications that involve the demolition, or partial demolition, of buildings and structures that make a positive contribution to the character and appearance of a 'special' area and which help define its identity, unless it can be shown beyond reasonable doubt, that the building or structure is unsafe, dangerous or otherwise beyond beneficial use. The council will seek to introduce article 4 designations in 'special' areas that are not protected by conservation area status.
- Seek high quality design in new development that respects and is sympathetic to the particular character and appearance of the area. New development should have regard to the contribution to local character by (1) historic property plot sizes and boundaries, (2) historic layouts and patterns of development (3) open spaces of historic value (4) traditional uses or mix of uses, (5) characteristic materials, scale of buildings and detailing, (6) the siting and composition of buildings and the spaces they create, (7) local vistas and views, (8) the extent to which traffic intrudes or reduces the enjoyment of the area by pedestrians, (9) the intensity of development in the locality. New development should respect the character, appearance and grain of the area. It should respect the predominant building style, but where a uniform style does not prevail, contemporary designs of a high quality will be encouraged.
- In predominantly residential areas where these designations apply, replacement dwellings will only be permitted on the basis of one-for-one, unless otherwise justified in design terms. A replacement dwelling or an extension to a dwelling will be refused if its design does not blend in with the form, scale, mass, height, use of materials and architectural detailing of the vernacular character of the area. Furthermore, changes of use and or the sub-division of a dwelling into smaller units will not be permitted where this would conflict with the character of the area.
- Resist the loss of individual and groups of trees of public amenity value together with open space that contribute towards the character of the area.
- Insist that where changes of use are acceptable, such a change respects and enhances the local historic as well as visual character of the area.

- Protect vistas, views, landmarks and topographical features, either within or affecting the setting of an area.

Note to applicants

The council will only consider fully detailed applications for development within or affecting the setting of a conservation area, special character area, streetscape area and area of good quality public townscape. Conservation area consent applications for demolition must be accompanied by fully detailed applications for subsequent redevelopment. Consent for demolition is likely to be made conditional on implementation of an approved replacement development.

Relevant local plan policies:

Policy BE 1, BE 2, BE 3, BE 4, BE 5, BE 6, BE 14, BE 16, H 12 and H 14 of the Christchurch Local Plan.

Development affecting Open Land, Public Settings and Accessible Landscapes

Policy Aim

To protect open areas and public settings some of which are not designated as Green Belt or for their nature conservation interest, but still act as areas of green space that contribute towards local character and distinctiveness and furthermore, are valued by residents.

Policy Application

Development on or around allotments, public and private open spaces, school playing fields, cemeteries, together with:

- Avon Water Meadows and Avon River Terraces and flood Plain
- The Stour Valley, Stour Terraces and Flood Plain, St Catherine's Hill and Grove Copse;
- Stanpit Marsh and land to the north, the Mude Valley;
- Roeshot Hill to Staple Cross;
- Nea meadows, Chewton Common, Highcliffe Cliff-top, Walkford Brook;
- Burton Village Green together with open land east and west of Burton Village.

Policy Derivation

London Borough of Richmond, ENV 3, as exhibited in 'From Design Policy to Design Quality, Royal Town Planning Institute, 2002. Better local Plans – A Guide to Writing Effective Policies, Planning Officers Society, 1997.

Cap 4 Development Affecting Open Land, Public Open Space, Public Settings and Accessible Landscapes

Permission will not be granted for new development or uses in open areas and settings of landscape and townscape importance that do not retain the open and accessible character of the area and or any important views or vistas. However, permission may be granted for new development and uses that are ancillary to the existing nature and use of the area. Such development proposals will be judged against the other policies of this guidance, local plan policies and national planning policy guidance.

The council will protect and seek to enhance open areas and settings of landscape and townscape importance. In considering development on sites adjoining or otherwise affecting these areas, the council will take into account any possible visual or other impact that adversely affects their character or setting and may refuse planning permission for that reason.

Note to applicants:

Applicants will need to clearly show how their proposals conform to the other policies of this guidance, local plan policies and national planning policies and furthermore, clearly show how their proposals maintain the open and accessible character of the area together with important views and vistas.

Relevant local plan policies:

Policies L 1 - L 19 and ENV 7 - ENV 22 of the Christchurch Local Plan



7.6 Borough-wide Policies

7.6.1 One of the most significant long term issues for the character of all parts of the Borough is the impact of utilities and telecommunication installations. These can often have a creeping effect over time where the quality or character of the landscape or townscape is gradually eroded. Specific policies for the control of these issues are set out below.

Controlling Utility Services

Policy Aim

To preserve and enhance the unique characteristics of the Borough's Landscapes and Townscapes.

Policy Application

Utilities development throughout the Borough.

Policy Derivation

Better Local Plans – A Guide to Writing Effective Policies, Planning Officers Society, 1997. Code of Best Practice on Mobile Phone Network Development, ODPM, 2002.

Cap 9 Controlling Utility Services

Overhead power lines:

- Overhead power lines or high powered electrical installations, should be sited away from;
- The river terraces, heathlands and flood plains.
- Designated SSSI, SAC, SPA, RAMSAR and SNCI.
- Tranquil and accessible countryside areas.
- Urban edges and enclaves.
- Coastal and inter-tidal areas.
- Conservation areas and sites or buildings of historic or architectural interest, including listed buildings and scheduled ancient monuments, good borough and neighbourhood landmarks.
- Special character areas, streetscape areas and areas of good quality public townscape including identified views and vistas, and positive gateways.
- Public parks and gardens and other open spaces used for both formal and informal recreation.

Provided there is no alternative to power lines crossing sensitive areas, they should be placed underground if this is not damaging to sites of nature conservation value or archaeological importance.

Telecommunication installations:

In the first instance, the council will seek to achieve the re-use and sharing of existing telecommunications facilities and equipment. Proposals for new stand-alone facilities and equipment will only be permitted where the applicant can clearly demonstrate, with evidence, that there are technical or legal reasons why re-use or sharing cannot be achieved. In such circumstances, proposals for new facilities and equipment will be judged against the following criteria:

- Whether it can be demonstrated that the application site is the best-fit (with respect to environmental, legal and technical criteria) compared to all alternative sites that have been considered (an assessment of alternative sites against the criteria cited above should be submitted to the council with the proposal).
- Whether a proper and detailed assessment of the character of the area, within which the application site is located, has been carried out and submitted to the council.
- Whether through contextual and detailed analysis the siting, size or appearance of the proposal would harm the visual or other environmental characteristics of the area, any identified features of that area or the setting of a feature or area, that contributes towards the area's sense of identity or distinctiveness.

- Whether consideration has been given to camouflaging or disguising the facilities or equipment so that their visual impact is minimised.
- Whether the size of the facilities and equipment can be reduced while still meeting core operational requirements.

Note to applicants:

All applicants for new telecommunications facilities and equipment are advised to develop their proposals in conformance with the code of best practice on mobile phone network development published by ODPM (2002) and furthermore, show how the code has been taken into account through the submission of the proposal to the council.

Relevant Local Plan Policies: Policy EI 10

