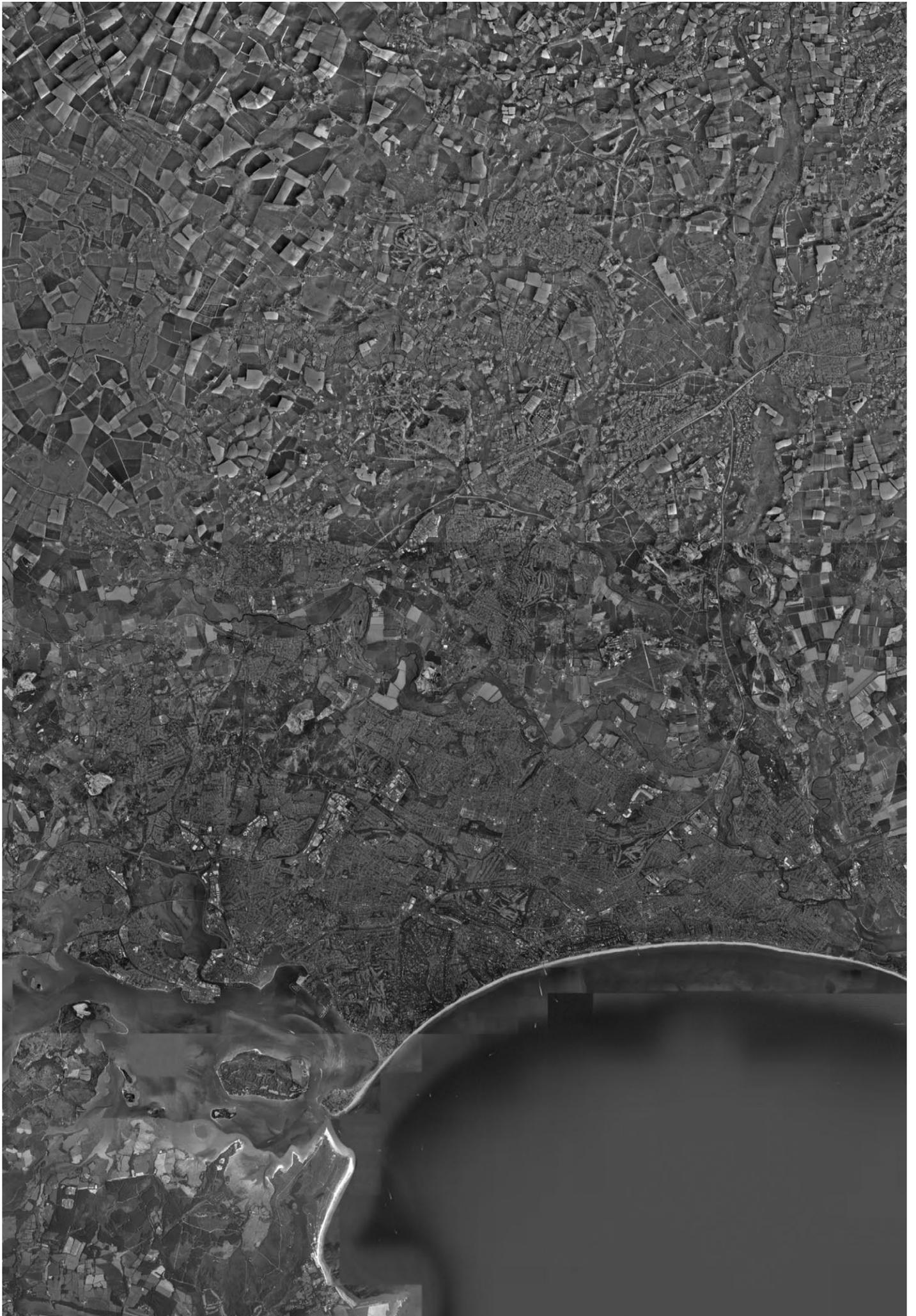


# EAST DORSET HOUSING OPTIONS MASTERPLAN REPORT

NOVEMBER 2010





# CONTENTS

## EAST DORSET HOUSING OPTIONS MASTERPLAN REPORT

Executive Summary .....	PAGE 004
01 Introduction .....	PAGE 008
02 Background Context .....	PAGE 012
03 The Sites & their Local Context .....	PAGE 016
04 Spatial Policy & Research Analysis .....	PAGE 026
05 Existing Development Proposals & Promotions .....	PAGE 032
06 Constraints & Opportunities Analysis .....	PAGE 038
07 Transport Analysis .....	PAGE 078
08 Urban Character Study .....	PAGE 098
09 Identified Land for Consideration .....	PAGE 124
10 Land Use & Infrastructure Requirements .....	PAGE 142
11 The New Neighbourhoods Illustrated .....	PAGE 150
12 Summary and Conclusions .....	PAGE 154
Appendix 1: Strategic Transport Models .....	PAGE 160

# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

## Background

Proposals for new housing in East Dorset District up to 2027 are to be delivered through a Core Strategy, which is being prepared jointly by East Dorset District Council and Christchurch Borough Council. Despite the revocation of the South West Regional Spatial Strategy (RSS) by the Secretary of State (SoS) in July 2010, East Dorset District Council are committed to progressing the Core Strategy and planning for much needed new housing in the District that will support the local economy and provide new affordable accommodation for local people. Whilst much of the new housing could be located within the urban area, there is a need to consider housing in a number of areas of search around some of the key towns in the District, thus preventing “town cramming” particularly in historic towns and villages such as Wimborne Minster.

## The Brief

In order to investigate this, East Dorset District Council appointed a consultant team, led by planning and design practice Broadway Malyan, to prepare masterplans for a number of residential led new neighbourhoods to three settlements within the District (Wimborne Minster, Corfe Mullen and Ferndown and West Parley) and consider options for new neighbourhoods within areas of search around the town of Verwood.

The masterplans will help support and provide an evidence base for the emerging Core Strategy, guide development control decisions and form the basis for negotiations with prospective developers in each location.

Without a “top-down” RSS generated figure, East Dorset District Council are keen to explore what the potential capacity of these locations is and how they can help create high quality, sustainable developments that are fully integrated into the local character and townscape pattern without having a detrimental impact on the surrounding countryside.

## This Document

This document, entitled the “East Dorset Housing Options Masterplan Report” is the first of three distinct parts of the project and it considers the areas of search around Verwood. A similar report has been prepared for Wimborne Minster, Corfe Mullen, Ferndown and West Parley. The later stages comprise:

Stage 2: Masterplanning Report

Stage 3: Implementation Plan

This Stage 1 report provides an evidence base for the “Options for Consideration” consultation stage of the Core Strategy, which will be consulted on in the autumn of 2010. It also comprises the baseline for the masterplanning report in Stage 2.

## The Study Area

East Dorset District Council identified two areas of search and potential locations for development around Verwood:

- Land to the north of Verwood; and
- Land to the south of Verwood.

## The Settlement

There has been settlement at Verwood since the 14th Century - however the town grew slowly until the 1960's when it expanded rapidly from a population of just 3,510 (early 1970's) to a population of over 13,500 today (Dorset County Council).

It is now one of the largest towns in East Dorset District. Similarly to Corfe Mullen, Verwood lacks a distinct centre. The town is instead focussed around two small centres, the historic centre is located around the junction with Station Road and Manor Road which has recently been redeveloped to form a pedestrianised central square with a range of local facilities and shops.

The local recreational ground and The ‘Verwood Hub’ are also located in this area. There is also a second local centre with a Morrison’s supermarket and leisure centre located at the geographical centre of Verwood. In terms of recreation and sports provision, Verwood has a good range of open spaces and a leisure centre as well as the ‘The Verwood Hub’ and Potterne Park where there are formal and informal facilities.

The majority of people who live in Verwood work in the larger conurbations of Poole and Bournemouth commuting by car, (just under 20% work in Verwood). This may be due to the relative lack of employment floorspace in the town.

The settlement is the subject of development interest, including land

outside the urban areas and within the areas of search for this study. A number of landowners and developers have suggested their sites to the Council as part of the Council's Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment (SHLAA).

#### **Constraints and Opportunities**

In order to assess suitable areas for development, an analysis of the constraints and opportunities within each of the areas of search was undertaken.

The identified areas of search for the new neighbourhoods are different in character and size, but both are constrained by environmental and other physical constraints.

There are three SSSIs and several SNCIs present within 1km of the Verwood north area of search. Romford Bridge SNCI is within the southwest of the site, which is designated as mostly deciduous woodland with a pond. In addition, there are areas of woodland (within the west of the study area), hedgerows, potential veteran trees, ponds and ditches and areas of grassland and scrub.

There are two statutory ecological designations within the Verwood south area of search - Moors River System SSSI lies within the south of the study area and follows the route of the River Crane and Potterne Hill, located within the site to the east, is designated as a SNCI. The wider area includes several additional SSSIs and SNCIs. There are a number of important

ecological features within the study area, including Heathy Howe area of woodland, hedgerows, potential veteran trees, ponds and ditches, areas of grassland, scrub and heathland.

The areas of search are identified as being within the South East Dorset Green Belt and Verwood itself is identified as a settlement whose physical identity is protected by the Green Belt. Whilst the town is surrounded by Green Belt land and a key gap needs to be maintained between Verwood and Three Legged Cross, the southern area of search is considered to be of a small enough scale so as to not impact on this gap and the separation of the two areas. The northern area of search has no Green Belt separation issues.

The heathland, known as the Dorset Heaths, are a particular issue for both areas and are designated as Special Protection Areas (SPA) and Special Areas of Conservation (SAC), both of which are statutory designations of European importance. The Dorset Heaths are vulnerable to the effects that result from urban development in the vicinity. As a result, no residential development can take place within 400m of the edges of the Dorset Heaths and any residential development within 5km should provide Suitable Alternative Natural Greenspace (SANG) in accordance with Natural England's requirements. SANGs will be required for development in both areas of search.

Other features within the areas of search include constraints such as Scheduled Ancient Monuments (SAMs) and listed buildings.

A power line is present across the northern boundary of the eastern part of the northern site, however it is considered unlikely that this will restrict development on the site. Proximity to local services and facilities is also a key factor. Both areas of search are relatively close to facilities, but there are limitations to the provision, most notably the absence of a secondary school.

Both locations have transport constraints on the highway network and the settlement is not served by rail. However, there are opportunities to connect into existing public transport networks, and encourage walking and cycling.

#### **Urban Character**

In order to understand the settlement further and, in particular, its urban character in terms of local vernacular, density and townscape, a character study has been undertaken. This also helps inform potential density and design characteristics for the future developments in the stage 2 report. Within the settlement, areas of different character were examined which reflect different densities, typologies and, importantly urban edge conditions.

In terms of character, the vast majority of Verwood is modern family housing much of which comprises private, detached dwellings with front driveways and garages.

## EAST DORSET HOUSING OPTIONS MASTERPLAN REPORT

There are however, several traditional thatch and cob cottages together with some nineteenth and early twentieth century brick villas and workers' cottages remaining. Of the character areas studied, densities in Verwood ranged between 4 and 38 dwellings per hectare (dph).

The second stage of this process was to refine this further and identify specific sites, based on more localised factors such as landscape, environmental and conservation designations and land use. This resulted in the following sites being identified for development:

### Verwood North

- Land west of Trinity School
- Land west of Eastworth Road

### Verwood South

- Land south of Howe Lane
- Land south of Manor Road

### Development Capacities

Each site was then measured and an average residential density of 20 dph applied to provide a housing figure. These were then totalled to provide town wide figures. A potential population figure was also generated based on an average household size of 2.46 people.

### Land use and infrastructure requirements

With the potential housing and population figures established, an investigation of the necessary community infrastructure required to support this new housing and population was carried out. At a town-wide level the following was identified:

#### Verwood North

- Possible new secondary school at Verwood. Potential site already identified and purchased next to existing Emmanuel School.
- Sports, recreation and open space (2.04ha)
- SANGs (between 4.36ha and 8.71 ha)

#### Verwood South

- Possible new secondary school at Verwood. Potential site already identified and purchased next to existing Emmanuel School.
- Sports, recreation and open space (1.71ha)
- SANGs (between 3.64ha and 7.29ha)

### Concepts

The report concludes with a series of concept plans showing how the sites could accommodate development spatially. They also show how they link in with the adjacent urban areas and wider countryside.

### Next Steps

This report sets the foundations for the Core Strategy consultation which will take place in the autumn of 2010. It also provides a robust base from which to masterplan the areas in the Stage 2 report. The Stage 2 report will be undertaken following the Core Strategy consultation.



Existing housing adjacent Eastworth Road - North Verwood