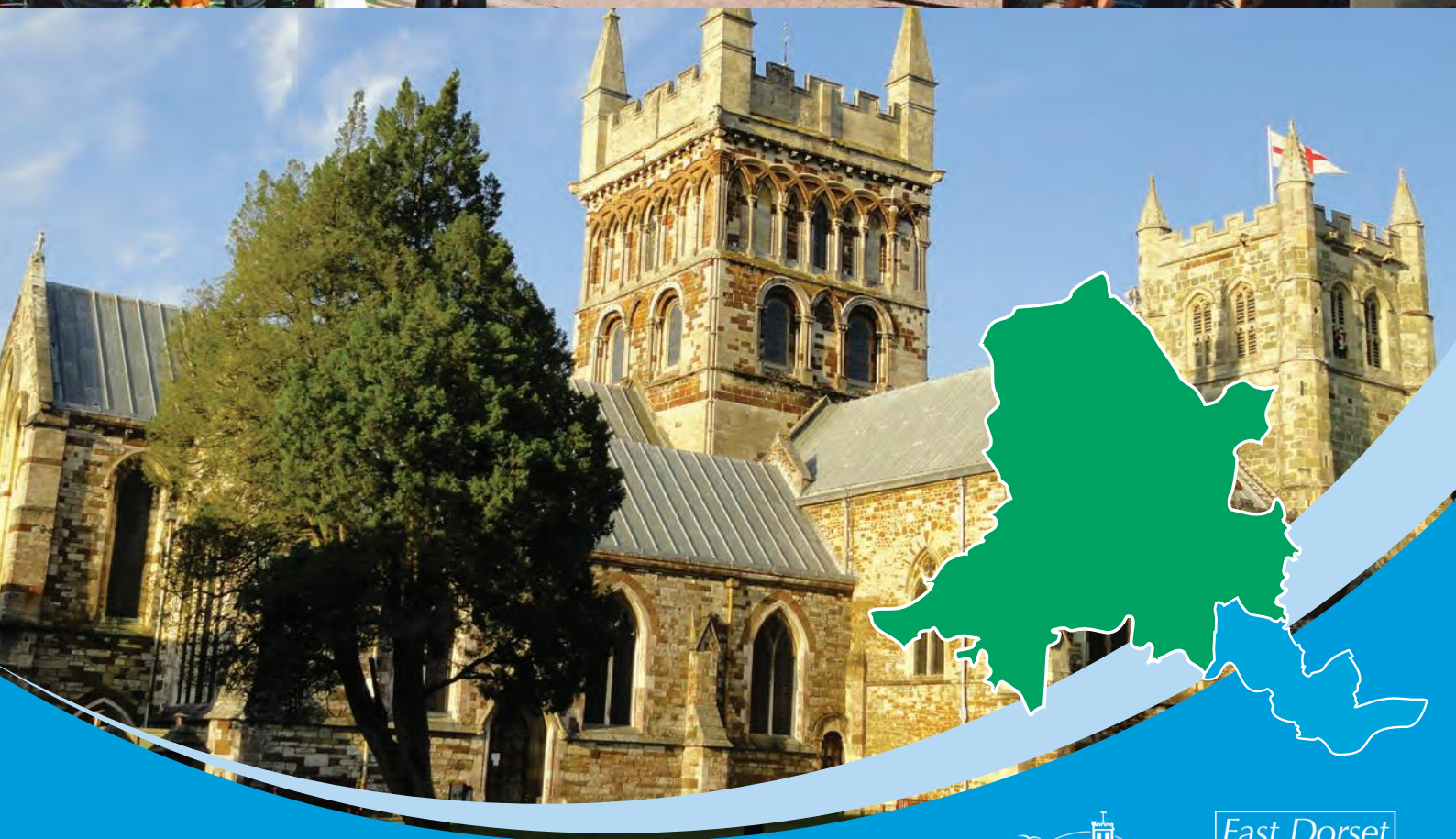
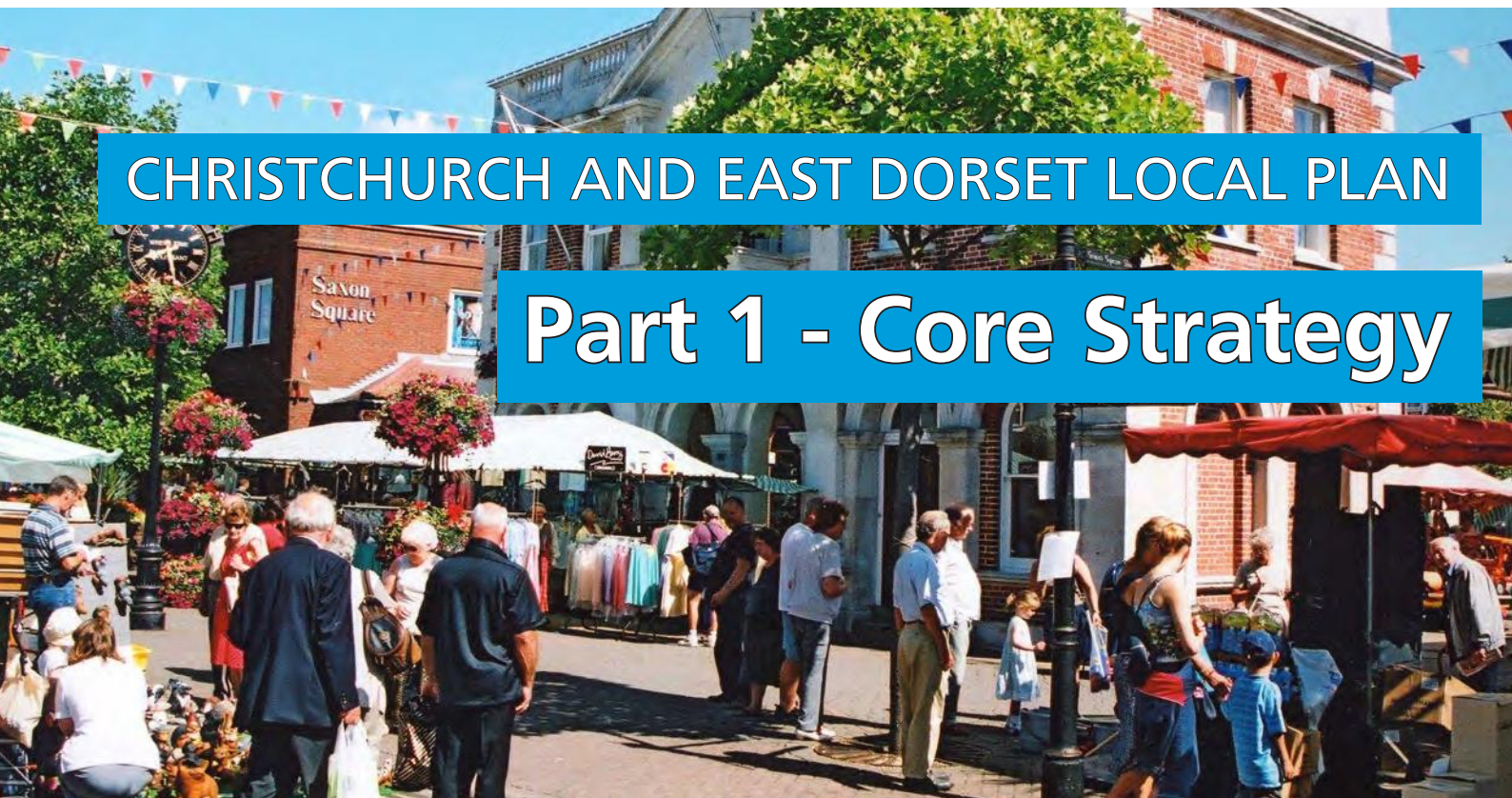


CHRISTCHURCH AND EAST DORSET LOCAL PLAN

Part 1 - Core Strategy



Adopted April 2014
www.dorsetforyou.com

Supporting the Tourist Economy

16.18 The historic town centres of Christchurch and Wimborne have the potential to enhance tourism and the evening economy through the provision of restaurants and cafés in appropriate locations. Tourism is a key part of the local economy which employs 1,700 people and is a growing sector which plays an important role in creating jobs and sustaining the local economy. The area serves as an important base for visiting tourist destinations within the districts and elsewhere, such as The New Forest National Park, The Jurassic Coast and Bournemouth and Poole.

16.19 The Core Strategy adopts a sustainable approach to tourism in avoiding harmful impacts on important natural features which make the area attractive to visitors and in reducing recreational pressure on sensitive habitats, the Dorset Heathlands and the New Forest.

Policy PC6

Tourism

The Core Strategy will protect and enhance the unique features of Christchurch and East Dorset that attract visitors to the area whilst encouraging investment. This will be achieved through the following measures:

- Protection of the beaches, river front and Christchurch Harbour and supporting appropriate sustainable tourist related development.
- Tourist related development must avoid increasing visitor pressure on the Dorset Heaths. Appropriate mitigation measures will be identified through the Heathlands Supplementary Planning Document and the Site Specific Allocations Development Plan Document.
- By protecting visitor attraction sites unless it can be proved the use is no longer economically viable, and promoting new visitor attractions and accommodation in sustainable locations.
- By encouraging sustainable transport to tourist and cultural sites.
- By supporting the aims and objectives of the Cranborne Chase and West Wiltshire Downs Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty.

Tourism and culture in Christchurch and East Dorset will develop in the context of the wider sub- regional strategy (Towards 2015 – Shaping Tomorrow’s Tourism), by improving planning and use of resources through collaboration across Dorset, Bournemouth and Poole, which values local distinctiveness and diversity.

Key Facts

In Christchurch there are:

- 12 Conservation Areas.
- 287 Statutory Listed Buildings (six Grade I).
- 136 locally listed buildings.
- 2 scheduled monuments on the National Heritage at Risk Register (2012)

In East Dorset there are:

- 19 Conservation Areas.
- 697 Statutory Listed Buildings (19 Grade I, 41 Grade II*).
- 5 Historic Parks and Gardens.
- 41 scheduled monuments: 3 buildings and 1 registered park on the National Heritage at Risk Register.

Policy HE1

Valuing and Conserving our Historic Environment

Heritage assets are an irreplaceable resource and will be conserved and where appropriate enhanced for their historic significance and importance locally to the wider social, cultural and economic environment.

- The significance of all heritage assets and their settings (both designated and non-designated) will be protected and enhanced especially elements of the historic environment which contribute to the distinct identity of Christchurch and East Dorset. Such key historic elements include the market towns of Wimborne Minster and Christchurch; Christchurch Quay; Highcliffe and Christchurch Castles; 11th Century Christchurch Priory Church and Saxon Mill; site of civil war siege in 1645; the setting of Wimborne Minster; significant Neolithic, Iron Age and Roman archaeological landscape; and prominent estates such as Cranborne and Wimborne St Giles.
- As part of its Heritage Strategy, a publicly accessible Dorset Historic Environment Record will be maintained; Conservation Area Appraisals will be kept up to date, and Article 4 Directions used where necessary.
- A Local List of heritage assets will be created in East Dorset and the Local Lists of heritage assets will be maintained to support the conservation of non-designated assets of distinctive local character.
- Both Councils will seek to promote and support initiatives to reduce the number of heritage assets at risk including the sensitive re-use and adaption of historic buildings.
- Working with the Highways Authority, and Town and Parish councils, highway infrastructure and public realm works will be designated to protect and enhance the historic environment.

Design

14.9 Christchurch has a diverse built environment, development of which was largely influenced by the Borough's coastal setting, topography and presence of flood plains.

14.10 The urban area represents a predominately modern, post war environment, which has grown up around a historic town centre with pockets of older buildings predominantly in the Town Centre, Purewell and Mudeford. Much of the residential development is good quality and low rise. The densities vary considerably across the Borough, which reflects the historic development of neighbourhoods over the last two centuries, and range from generous plots with low density housing in Walkford and Friars Cliff (average 10dph), to terraced cottage plots in Bargates and Purewell (30-40dph).

14.11 Even though the Borough does not currently have specifically designated 'character areas', the 2003 Christchurch Borough-wide Character Assessment carried out a series of urban neighbourhood studies and specifies the essential qualities which give each area in the Borough its special character, and how these areas are sensitive to change with regard to conservation and heritage policy. In particular, the Borough-wide Character Assessment emphasised the importance of waterside areas to the character of the Borough.

14.12 East Dorset has witnessed rapid growth in the last 50 years. The area contains a number of suburban developments, often built at low density, with a scattering of houses in the remainder of the countryside. The housing stock is relatively new, with Wimborne Minster and the smaller villages being the exception in having an older and higher density building stock.

14.13 Taking into account development pressures it is inevitable that the area will need to face and adapt to change. The aim of the emerging policies should be to preserve valued features in the towns, which give them their distinctive characters and sense of place. New development should respect the prevailing characteristics of a local area and, where possible, enhance those neighbourhoods in need of improvement both within the existing urban areas and within the rural countryside. New development will be expected to be attractive, functional, sustainable and of the highest quality, optimising the site potential and respecting the scale of the locality.

Key Facts
- The Borough and District are built at low density with a high proportion of bungalows and detached dwellings (64.4% in East Dorset and 42.5% in Christchurch) - Christchurch, at 20.8% has a higher number of flats than East Dorset (9.9%), mainly concentrated in Highcliffe, the Town Centre and Grange wards - There are 17 designated Special Character Areas in East Dorset

Policy HE2

Design of New Development

Within Christchurch and East Dorset the design of development must be of a high quality, reflecting and enhancing areas of recognised local distinctiveness. To achieve this, development will be permitted if it is compatible with or improves its surroundings in:

- Layout
- Site coverage
- Architectural style
- Scale
- Bulk
- Height
- Materials
- Landscaping
- Visual impact
- Relationship to nearby properties including minimising general disturbance to amenity
- Relationship to mature trees.

This is within the context of the Christchurch Borough Wide Character Assessment. In the East Dorset rural area, design should accord with the Countryside Design Summary. An East Dorset Urban Design Guide will set out the key characteristics expected to be incorporated into schemes. In Special Character Areas development must respect the identified features and characteristics. Careful design to reduce the risk of crime will be required.

Landscape Quality and Character

14.14 The Plan area contains nationally and locally important landscapes. The aim is to ensure that development does not harm these areas, but adds to their attractive character. Additionally, outside designated landscape areas the quality of development will need to ensure that the character and visual amenity of settlements, their setting and the countryside are protected and enhanced.

Key Facts

- 45% of East Dorset is covered by the Cranborne Chase and West Wiltshire Downs Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty.
- A further 23% of the District is covered by Areas of Great Landscape Value.

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• 45% of East Dorset is covered by the Cranborne Chase and West Wiltshire Downs Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty. • A further 23% of the District is covered by Areas of Great Landscape Value.

Policy HE3

Landscape Quality

Development will need to protect and seek to enhance the landscape character of the area.

Proposals will need to demonstrate that the following factors have been taken into account:

1. The character of settlements and their landscape settings.
2. Natural features such as trees, hedgerows, woodland, field boundaries, water features and wildlife corridors.
3. Features of cultural, historical and heritage value.
4. Important views and visual amenity.
5. Tranquillity and the need to protect against intrusion from light pollution, noise and motion.

Development proposals within and/or affecting the setting of the Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty will need to demonstrate that account has been taken of the relevant Management Plan.

Within the Areas of Great Landscape Value development will be permitted where its siting, design, materials, scale and landscaping are sympathetic with the particular landscape quality and character of the Areas of Great Landscape Value. Planning permission will be refused for major developments in these designated areas except in exceptional circumstances and where they are in the public interest.

Open Space, Leisure and Green Infrastructure

14.15 The provision of attractive, accessible and functional open space is important for the well being and health of residents and the support of our valuable wildlife. The Councils seek to ensure that local residents have access to open space to meet their needs.

14.16 The provision of large open spaces and green infrastructure also serves to divert recreational pressure away from the sensitive Dorset Heaths. The mitigation benefits of sites provided in support of the heathland policies will be enhanced by green infrastructure through improved connectivity with other open spaces, thereby promoting informal recreation (such as cycling and dog walking) and facilitating access by alternative forms of transport to the car. Green infrastructure will also be designed to protect and enhance sites of biodiversity value.

14.17 The Christchurch and East Dorset Open Space, Sport and Recreation Studies (2007) set out in detail the existing provision throughout the Plan area. It also identifies the level of provision that should be available and where shortfalls exist.

14.18 The SE Dorset Green Infrastructure Strategy (2011) identifies large scale, cross boundary needs.

Introduction

4.1 The Key Strategy sets out broad locations where residential and commercial development, services and facilities will be located across Christchurch and East Dorset over the plan period to 2028. This strategy is central to shaping the future role and function of our settlements.

4.2 The high quality natural and built environment of Christchurch and East Dorset is what makes the area an attractive place to live and work in. It is important that the strategy maintains and enhances these assets while meeting local needs and supporting sustainable economic growth. Opportunities for new development are constrained, in particular, by the importance of the natural environment and floodplains. Additionally, the Green Belt limits growth opportunities.

4.3 It is important that we plan carefully to reduce the impact we have on climate change. It is vital also that the future effects of climate change are taken into account. Increases in seasonal rainfall and sea level rise means that significant parts of the existing urban area are affected by high flood risk.

4.4 The Strategy is also dependant on improvements to the local transport network in the form of enhancements for pedestrians, cyclists and motor vehicles in relation to highways, junctions and public transport. Future development will need to be located primarily in accessible areas which reduce the need to travel and avoid harmful emissions that contribute to climate change.

4.5 Despite the natural and infrastructure constraints there are important local needs for new housing, employment, leisure, shopping, community facilities and services that have to be accommodated. The Key Strategy sets out how the needs of the community can best be balanced to ensure that appropriate infrastructure is provided and that the environment is protected and enhanced.

Presumption in Favour of Sustainable Development

Policy KS1

Presumption in Favour of Sustainable Development

When considering development proposals the Council will take a positive approach that reflects the presumption in favour of sustainable development contained in the National Planning Policy Framework. It will always work pro-actively with applicants jointly, in particular through the pre-application process, to find solutions which mean that proposals can be approved wherever possible, and to secure development that improves the economic, social and environmental conditions in the area.

Planning applications that accord with the policies in this Plan (and, where relevant, with policies in neighbourhood plans) will be approved without delay, unless material considerations indicate otherwise. Where there are no policies relevant to the application or relevant policies are out of date at the time of making the decision then the Council will grant permission unless material considerations indicate otherwise – taking into account whether:

- a) any adverse impacts of granting permission would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits, when assessed against the policies in the National Planning Policy Framework taken as a whole; or
- b) specific policies in that Framework indicate that development should be restricted.

The Settlement Hierarchy

4.6 There are a wide range of settlement types including places that form part of the wider Bournemouth and Poole conurbation through to rural hamlets. A settlement hierarchy focuses the distribution of development across the area and sets out the general roles of individual settlements. Those settlements which provide the best access to services, facilities and employment are to provide the key focus for development, subject to constraints, such as floodplains, nature conservation etc.

4.7 Relevant Evidence

4.8 Evidence to support the settlement hierarchy policy is contained partly in a regional report by Roger Tym and Partners which considers the function of settlements. Additionally, Town Factsheets and Profiles produced by Dorset County Council have informed the policy along with Area Profiles produced by Christchurch and East Dorset Councils.

Policy KS2

Settlement Hierarchy

The location, scale and distribution of development should conform with the settlement hierarchy, which will also help to inform service providers about the provision of infrastructure, services and facilities.

Settlement Type	Function
Main Settlements	The settlements which will provide the major focus for community, cultural, leisure, retail, utility, employment and residential development. This will include infill development as well as options for some greenfield development.
	Christchurch, Wimborne Minster, Ferndown and West Parley, Verwood, Corfe Mullen
District Centres	Settlements which will provide for smaller scale community, cultural, leisure, retail, employment and residential development within the existing urban areas.
	West Moors, Highcliffe
Suburban Centres	Settlements with no existing centres that will provide for some residential development along with community, leisure and retail facilities to meet day to day needs within the existing urban areas.
	Colehill, St Leonards and St Ives
Rural Service Centres	Main providers for the rural areas where residential development will be allowed of a scale that reinforces their role as providers of community, leisure and retail facilities to support the village and adjacent communities.
	Alderholt, Cranborne, Sixpenny Handley, Sturminster Marshall, Three Legged Cross

Settlement Type	Function
Villages	Settlements where only very limited development will be allowed that supports the role of the settlement as a provider of services to its home community.
	Burton, Hurn, Edmondsham, Furzehill, Gaunts Common, Gussage All Saints, Gussage St Michael, Hinton Martell, Holt, Horton, Longham, Shapwick, Wimborne St Giles, Witchampton, Woodlands/Whitmore
Hamlets	Settlements where development would not be allowed unless it was functionally required to be in the rural area.
	All other settlements

Green Belt Policy

Key Facts

- The Green Belt boundaries have not changed significantly since they were first drawn in 1982.
- The SE Dorset Green Belt covers about 33,000 hectares
 - Christchurch has 3,477 hectares (70% of Borough)
 - East Dorset has 16,840 hectares (47% of District)
- Between 1994 and 2009 about 2,100 homes were built on greenfield sites in the plan area, amounting to 32% of all housing development. This did not include Green Belt land as it had been deliberately left out when the boundaries were drawn to allow for this development.

4.9 Green Belt policy is an important tool in controlling the location of growth throughout the area. Over its 30 year history it has proved to be very successful in preventing the joining of settlements and has controlled the spread of development into the countryside. The Green Belt policy is therefore to be kept in place, subject to limited alterations of boundaries to allow for some housing and employment growth to help meet the needs of the local communities. Additionally, a number of areas are to be added to the Green Belt, which having previously been allocated for development, are no longer capable of being delivered.

4.10 Relevant Evidence

4.11 As part of work on the Regional Spatial Strategy a Green Belt review was undertaken. This identified the effectiveness of the Green Belt and which areas were most sensitive to change. This has been further supported by Masterplan studies to identify suitable strategic housing sites and work relating to strategic employment allocations. These have been used to help guide choices for the locations of strategic housing and employment allocations.

Settlement Type	Function
Villages	Settlements where only very limited development will be allowed that supports the role of the settlement as a provider of services to its home community.
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Policy KS3

Green Belt

Development in East Dorset District and Christchurch Borough will be contained by the South East Dorset Green Belt. The most important purposes of the Green Belt in the area are to:

- Protect the separate physical identity of individual settlements in the area by maintaining wedges and corridors of open land between them.
- To maintain an area of open land around the conurbation.

Limited changes to the existing boundaries are proposed to enable some new housing and employment to meet local needs and also to include areas in the Green Belt that are no longer capable of providing for these needs. The revised Green Belt boundaries will follow the edge of the new urban area. Significant open space and SANGs will be within the Green Belt, and will be shown on the Proposals Maps for each individual development proposal.

In accordance with the guidance contained within the National Planning Policy Framework, development proposals on sites considered as previously developed sites within the Green Belt shall be considered against sustainable development criteria, and prerequisites for development which include:

- Approval of a development brief by the Council,
- Agreement of a comprehensive travel plan, and
- A wildlife strategy to be agreed with the Council that ensures no harm to features of acknowledged biodiversity importance, as well as enhancing the biodiversity where possible through improving the condition of existing habitats or creation of new ones.

The Broad Location and Scale of Housing

4.12 Christchurch and East Dorset face major pressure to provide more housing. There is a high level of local housing need that cannot be met in the private market. Additionally, it is predicted that there will continue to be changes in the size and nature of households which will increase the need for new homes. The local economy also requires new homes to provide for the workforce. The Bournemouth and Poole Strategic Housing Market Assessment (2012) has considered these factors within the following context:

- Christchurch and East Dorset are amongst the least affordable areas in the South West.
- The size of households in the area is shrinking which increases housing demands.
- Young people find it particularly hard to afford a home in the area.
- There is a need to provide suitable housing to reduce health inequalities and improve educational attainment.
- The population of Christchurch and East Dorset is ageing and a lack of housing delivery will contribute to local economic decline. There is a need to provide an appropriate mix of housing to meet the needs of families and young people who are vital to the economy of the area.

4.13 This plan sets out the strategy for delivering housing in Christchurch and East Dorset for the plan period (2013 - 2028) informed by local evidence including the Bournemouth and Poole Strategic Housing Market Assessment (2012), Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessments (2012) and master planning work undertaken for new greenfield sites.

13 Managing the Natural Environment

Introduction

13.1 The area is renowned for its special and often rare natural environment with large areas of both Christchurch and East Dorset District being protected through European and national law, conventions and planning policy. As well as its beauty and nature conservation importance, the natural environment is important for the production of food, fuel and raw materials, for regulating climate, absorbing flooding, filtering pollution and providing health and happiness to local people and visitors. It is important therefore to protect these natural assets for their own sake.

13.2 The impact of climate change also affects all areas of planning and presents one of the biggest challenges for the Core Strategy. Dwindling global reserves of natural resources mean that policies must encourage the use of renewable resources, and make development more sustainable and efficient.

13.3 Communities are also faced with the practical effects of climate change, especially an ever greater threat of flooding and coastal erosion as a result of increased rainfall and sea level rise. Conversely, predicted dry summers will affect flows in some rivers, with impacts on habitats and water abstraction.

13.4 This section of the Core Strategy sets out policies for addressing issues associated with protecting the natural environment:

- Protecting sensitive habitats and species from the pressures of development.
- Ensuring that high standards of sustainable construction and energy efficiency apply to new development.
- Ensuring that new development does not become at risk of flooding.

Biodiversity and Geodiversity

13.5 The area is renowned for the quality of its natural environment and significant areas are protected by national and international legislation. These natural assets are a valuable resource both in their own right, and also in the role they play in attracting people to live, work and visit the area.

13.6 The key role for the Core Strategy is to ensure that future growth, especially in terms of housing and the economy, can take place without damaging the very high quality environment that attracts growth in the first place.

13.7 If impacts are unavoidable then mitigation should be put in place to reduce the harm caused. In particular, policies to mitigate the impact of residential development on the internationally protected Dorset Heathlands, including the provision of areas of Suitable Alternative Natural Greenspace (SANG) in larger developments as appropriate.

Key Facts

- In Christchurch 18.6%, and in East Dorset 9.7% of the land is protected by some form of nature conservation designation
- The proportion of SSSIs in favourable condition in both areas is fairly low (33% in Christchurch, 15% in East Dorset)
- There are 1,674 hectares of internationally designated Heathland in East Dorset and 397 hectares in Christchurch
- Much of this Heathland lies within close proximity to urban development, there is even Heathland within the boundary of Bournemouth Airport

Key Facts
• The plan area is primarily rural, but with 80% of people living in the main towns and urban areas • Ancient woodland is found in both Christchurch and East Dorset • 45% of East Dorset lies within the Cranborne Chase and West Wiltshire Downs Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty

13.8 The Lawton Report: Making Space For Nature, the findings of which are reflected in the Government's Natural Environment White Paper, concluded nature in England was highly fragmented and unable to respond effectively to new pressures such as climate and demographic change. The report set out a series of recommendations including that ecological networks, including areas for restoration are identified and protected through local planning. The White Paper proposes a new Biodiversity Strategy for England, establishing cross boundary Local Nature Partnerships, and Nature Improvement Areas will be created, delivered by local partnerships.

13.9 The Dorset Biodiversity Strategy aims to enhance ecological quality, extent, capacity and function of habitats. Its key principles include protecting natural assets, raising awareness, managing our best habitats, and monitoring Dorset's biodiversity.

13.10 The Dorset Local Geodiversity Action Plan aims to promote the conservation and enhancement of the geological resource, provide guidance and increase the appreciation and understanding of the geological heritage of the area.

13.11 To mitigate harm caused by human impacts on the protected Dorset Heaths, the Dorset Heathlands Interim Planning Framework, now the Dorset Heathlands Planning Framework Supplementary Planning Document, requires all residential development (of one unit net gain and above) between 400m and 5km of the heaths to contribute a financial sum to a projects fund which is used to provide alternative recreation space for the heaths, as well as management of them.

13.12 Research conducted to inform the Interim Planning Framework has suggested that alternative greenspaces should offer similar conditions to users that are found on the heaths, e.g. large natural and semi wild open spaces with freedom to let dogs off leads.

13.13 The Cranborne Chase and West Wiltshire Downs AONB Management Plan contains an objective to conserve and enhance characteristic habitats and species at a landscape scale. This looks to address the fragmentation of habitats by the creation of habitat corridors that allow species to respond to climate change.

13.14 The New Forest National Park Management Plan seeks to maintain and enhance the tranquillity of the National Park, by reducing the impacts of noise, visual intrusion and inappropriate activity. The 2008 Study "Changing patterns of visitor numbers within the New Forest National Park, with particular reference to the New Forest SPA" concludes that new development up to 20km from the Park could generate additional recreation pressures requiring mitigation to prevent further harm to protected species.

13.15 Priority habitats and species are those species and habitats of principle importance included in the England Biodiversity List published by the Secretary of State under Section 41 of the Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006.

13.16 National planning policy, together with the requirements set out in the Habitats Regulations, provide clear policy and legal advice on how developments should avoid, or mitigate impact upon designated sites and species. The Core Strategy does not repeat this guidance, but sets out locally specific policies relating to biodiversity in Christchurch and East Dorset.

13.17 Protection of habitats and species will be undertaken through the Councils' own work programmes, working with partners and the local community, and through implementing the initiatives and proposals within the Dorset Biodiversity Strategy, South East Dorset Green Infrastructure Strategy and the emerging Local Nature Partnerships and Nature Improvement Areas. This will also provide an approach that looks to create an expanded and more connected ecological network giving greater resilience to the natural environment against the pressures from climate change and development. Strategic Nature Areas identified on the Dorset Nature Map (Map 13.2) are a positive tool for coordinating activities that secure the retention and enhancement of features of interest as well as activities for the benefit of locally important species.

Policy ME1

Safeguarding Biodiversity and Geodiversity

The Core Strategy aims to protect, maintain and enhance the condition of all types of nature conservation sites, habitats and species within their ecological networks including:

- Internationally designated sites (SPA, SAC, Ramsar)
- Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI)
- Sites of Nature Conservation Interest (SNCI)
- Local Nature Reserves
- Priority species and habitats
- Important geological and geomorphological sites
- Riverine and coastal habitats
- Suitable Alternative Natural Greenspace (SANG)

Within Strategic Nature Areas identified on Map 13.3, specific action will be taken towards meeting targets for the maintenance, restoration and recreation of priority habitats and species, and linking habitats to create more coherent ecological networks that are resistant to climate change.

Where development is considered likely to impact upon particular sites, habitats or species as set out within the Dorset Biodiversity Protocol, it will need to be demonstrated that the development will not result in adverse impacts. To determine the likelihood of harm occurring, there should be an assessment of effects on any existing habitats, species and/or features of nature conservation importance, and the results of this assessment documented. The method of survey and level of detail will vary according to the size and type of development and whether any priority species and habitats exist on site. The survey should involve consultation and advice from Natural England, the Dorset Wildlife Trust, and Dorset County Council.

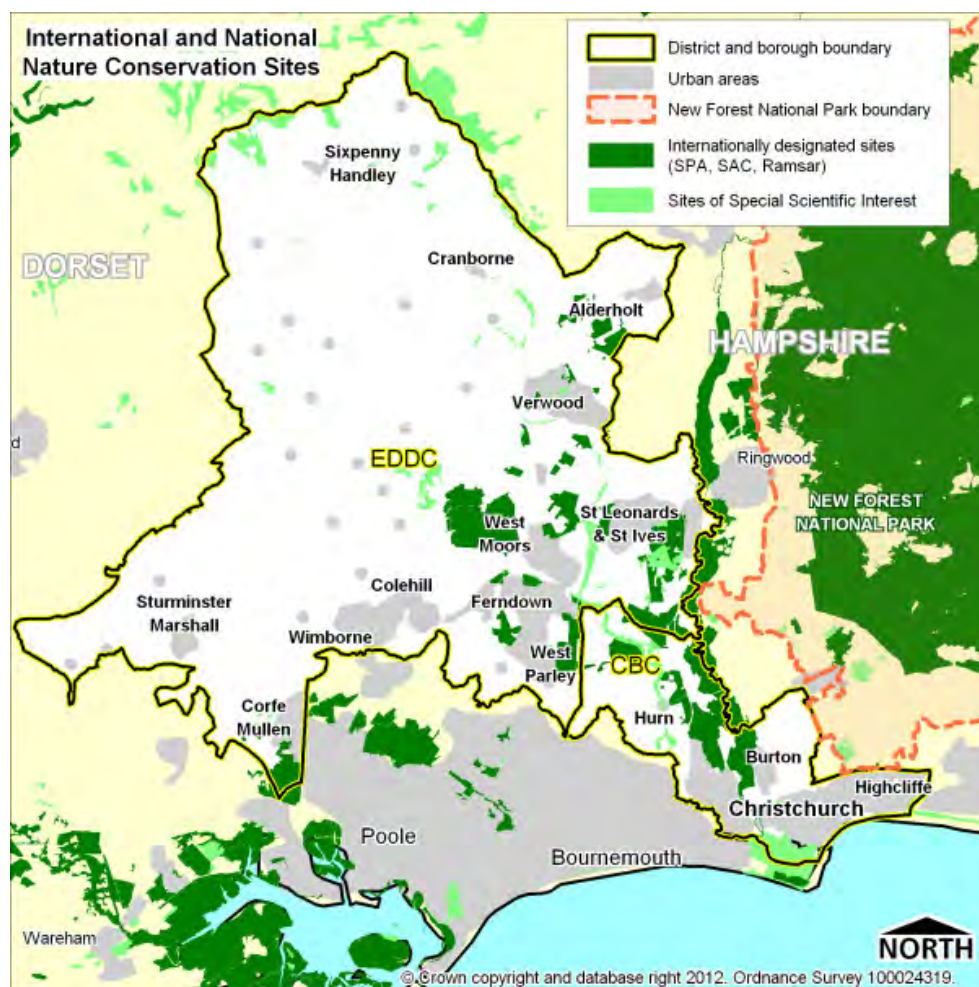
In considering the acceptability of proposals, the Council will assess their direct, indirect and cumulative impacts relative to the significance of the features' nature conservation value. National policy will be applied to ensure the level of protection afforded international, national and locally designated sites and species is commensurate with their status.

The following criteria should be addressed when development is proposed:

- Avoidance of harm to existing priority habitats and species through careful site selection, artificial lighting design, development design and phasing of construction and the use of good practice construction techniques.
- Retention of existing habitats and features of interest, and provision of buffer zones around any sensitive areas.

- Enhancement of biodiversity through improving the condition of existing habitats and achieving net gains in biodiversity, where possible. Particular attention should be paid to priority habitats and species referred to in Section 41 of the Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006 and the Dorset Biodiversity Strategy, and the Strategic Nature Areas identified on the Dorset Nature Map.
- Where harm is identified as likely to result, provision of measures to avoid or adequately mitigate that harm should be set out. Development should be refused if adequate mitigation or, as a last resort, compensation cannot be provided.
- Provision of adequate management of the retained and new features.
- Monitoring of habitats and species for a suitable period of time after completion of the development to indicate any changes in habitat quality or species numbers, and put in place corrective measures to halt or reverse any decline.

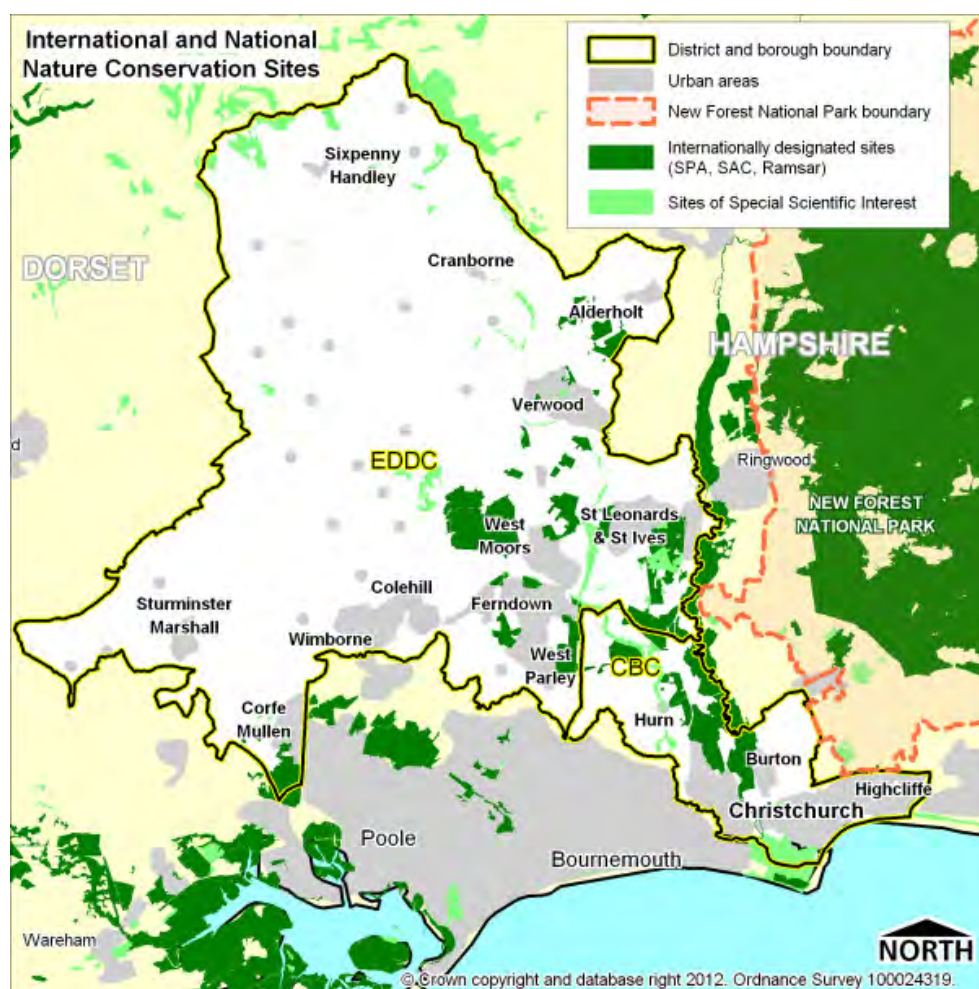
In addition, and in recognition of the function of the New Forest National Park, the Core Strategy will carefully consider any adverse impacts on the New Forest as a result of development.



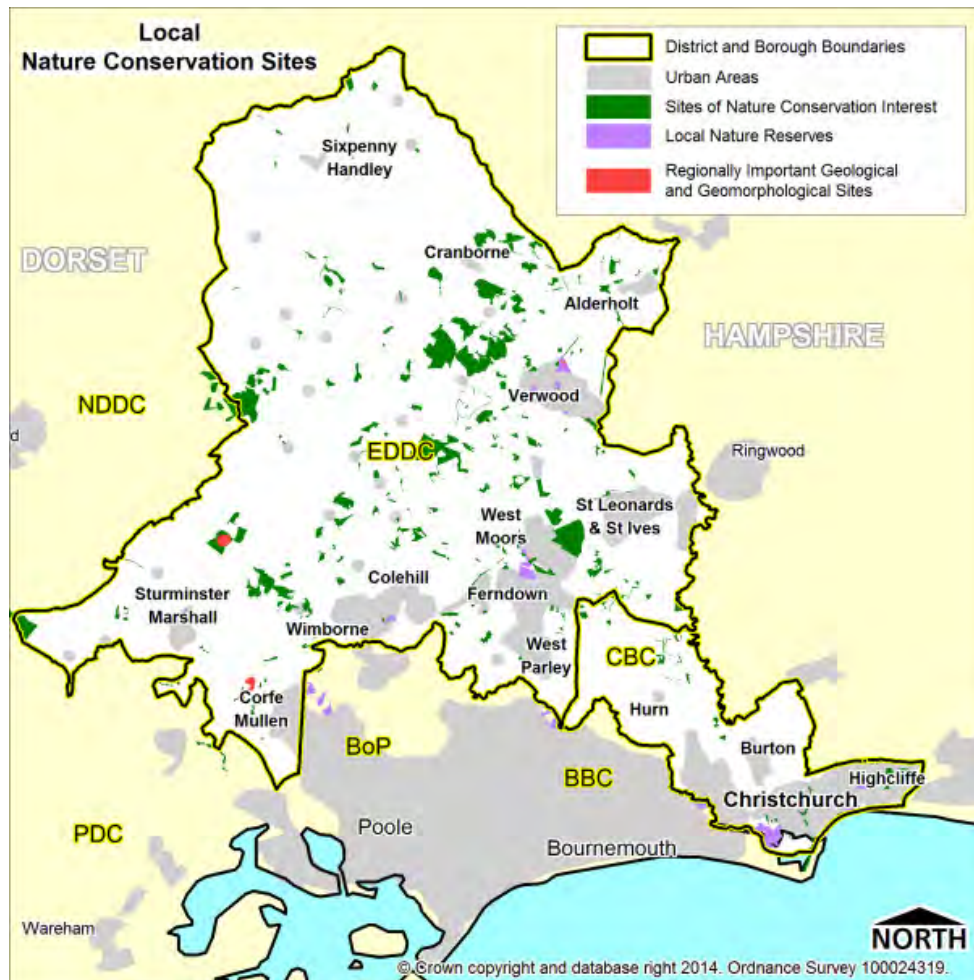
Map 13.1 International and National Nature Conservation sites in Christchurch and East Dorset

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- Where harm is identified as likely to result, provision of measures to avoid or adequately mitigate that harm should be set out. Development should be refused if adequate mitigation or, as a last resort, compensation cannot be provided.
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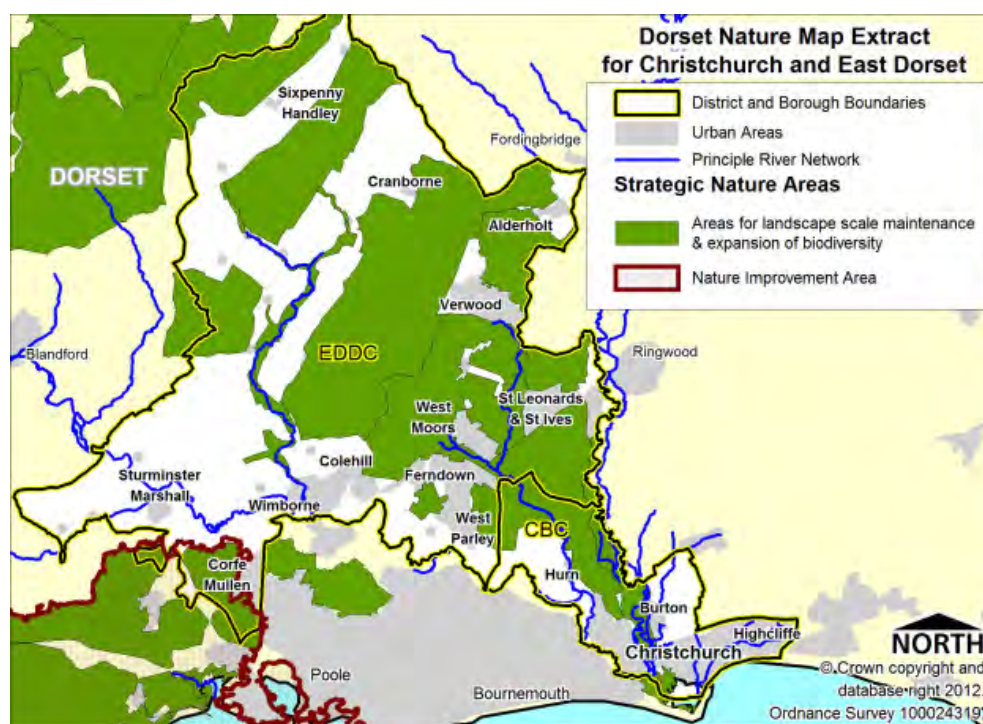
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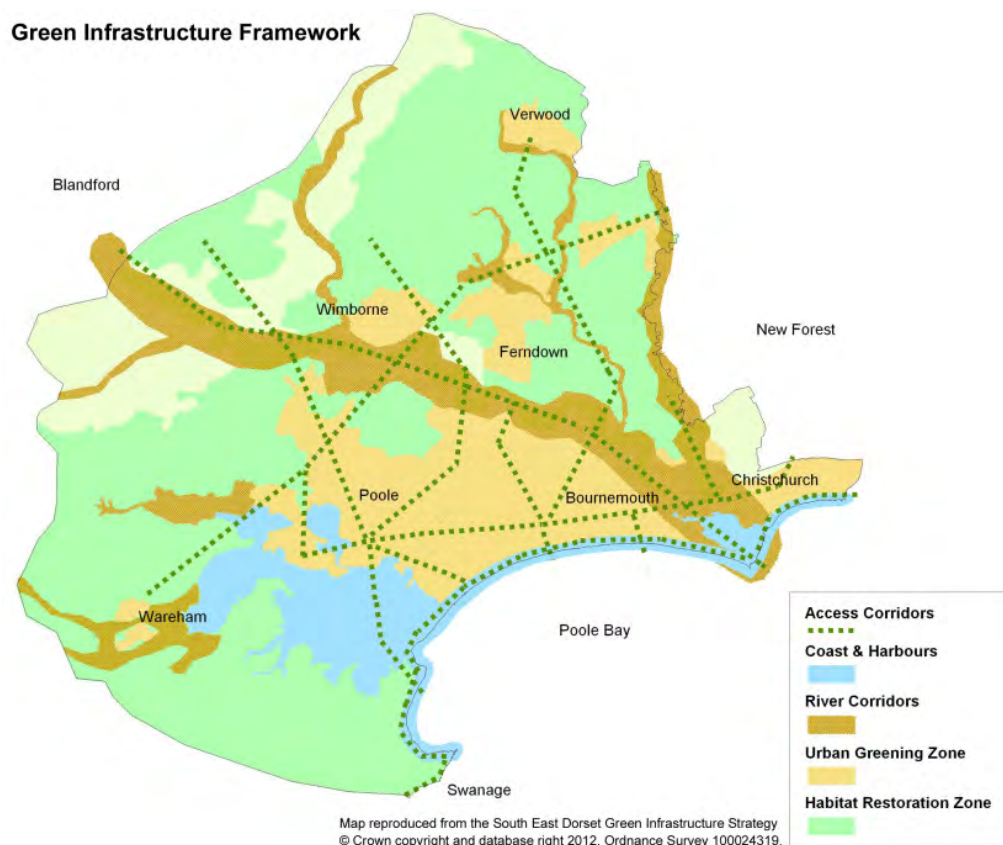
Map 13.1 International and National Nature Conservation sites in Christchurch and East Dorset



Map 13.2 Local Nature Conservation Sites in Christchurch and East Dorset



Map 13.3 Dorset Nature Map extract for Christchurch and East Dorset



Map 13.4 South East Dorset Green Infrastructure Framework

The Dorset Heathlands

13.18 There is strong evidence to support the conclusion that the Dorset Heaths are under significant pressure from urban development across South East Dorset. It is the view of Natural England that further residential development should not be permitted within 400m of a designated Heathland, and that between 400m and 5km, residential development would still have a significant effect such that it should be required to mitigate its impact.

13.19 The authorities have been formally required to consult Natural England about developments falling within a 400m zone of European and internationally protected heathlands. The principle through which this zone was established is set out in the Dorset Heathlands Planning Framework SPD. The authorities view, supported by the evidence, is that the Natural England consultation area represents the zone in which heathlands are most likely to be adversely affected by effects arising from residential development and consequently it should not be permitted in this area.

13.20 A detailed strategy for mitigation has been operated for some years as part of what is now the Dorset Heathlands Planning Framework (Supplementary Planning Document). The SPD sets out a programme of both short and long term measures to ensure that appropriate avoidance and mitigation measures are being implemented.

Suitable Alternative Natural Greenspace (SANGs)

13.21 The provision of SANGs is one of the key tools in mitigating the adverse impacts of development on the Dorset Heaths. Once SANGs are secured they need to be retained in perpetuity unless alternative sites offering the same degree of protection and benefit can be delivered. For large sites of approximately 50 dwellings and above it will be expected that the provision of SANGs will form part of the infrastructure provision of that site particularly where new neighbourhoods or greenfield sites are proposed.

Policy ME2

Protection of the Dorset Heathlands

In accordance with the advice from Natural England, the evidence available to the authorities and Core Strategy Habitats Regulations Assessment (HRA), no residential development will be permitted within 400m of protected European and internationally protected heathlands.

Any residential development between 400m and 5km of these areas will provide mitigation through a range of measures as set out in the Core Strategy, Site Specific Allocations Development Plan Document and the Dorset Heathlands Planning Framework Supplementary Planning Document including:

- Provision of on-site and off-site suitable alternative natural greenspace (provided in accordance with guidelines set out Appendix 5).
- Provision of other appropriate avoidance/mitigation measures.

The avoidance or mitigation measures are to be delivered in advance of the developments being occupied and must provide for mitigation in perpetuity. Suitable Alternative Natural Greenspaces (SANGs) will be secured by way of a legal agreement between the developer and the relevant council. The delivery of Heathland mitigation measures will be secured as set out in the Councils' Regulation 123 list. The authority will ensure that mitigation measures to avoid harm are given priority as required by this policy.

The Dorset Heathlands Planning Framework Supplementary Planning Document will set out the type of development circumstances where mitigation is required, and a list of mitigation projects. The Councils' Core Strategy and Site Specific Allocations Development Plan Document sit alongside the Supplementary Planning Document in identifying SANGs provision. This will ensure that suitable measures are in place by the time development is occupied. The combination of the 400m exclusion zone with the heathland mitigation measures set out above are designed to function together as an effective package avoiding the harmful effects of additional residential development on the European and internationally designated heathlands.

The Rural Economy

16.15 The rural economy performs a significant role in the sustainable economic growth of the plan area and particularly in East Dorset. The Core Strategy will strictly control economic development in open countryside away from existing settlements and the new strategic housing and employment allocations identified in the Core Strategy. There are however, opportunities for economic development to come forward in or on the edge of existing settlements where employment, housing, services and other facilities can be provided close together. Additionally, the Core Strategy will consider favourably proposals for sustainable rural tourism and leisure developments that benefit rural businesses, communities and visitors and which utilise and enrich, rather than harm, the character of the local countryside, towns, villages, buildings and other features. The Councils' recognise the important role played by major country landowners and large rural estates in shaping, maintaining and promoting rural housing, enterprise, tourism and landscape quality.

Policy PC4

The Rural Economy

Although economic development will be strictly controlled in open countryside away from existing settlements, in order to promote sustainable economic growth in the rural area, applications for economic development will be encouraged where development is located in or on the edge of existing settlements where employment, housing, services and other facilities can be provided close together. Such proposals should be small scale to reflect the rural character.

Proposals for the conversion and re-use of appropriately located and suitably constructed existing buildings in the countryside for economic development, including tourist related uses, must ensure:

- The proposal supports the vitality and viability of rural service centres and villages with existing facilities.
- Proposals must not adversely impact the supply of employment sites and premises and the economic, social and environmental sustainability of the area, when considering proposals which involve the loss of economic activity.
- Proposals do not have a materially greater impact on the openness of the Green Belt and the purpose of including land within it.
- The benefits outweigh the harm in terms of:
 1. The potential impact on countryside, landscapes and wildlife.
 2. Development is compatible with the pursuit of the Cranborne Chase and West Wiltshire Downs Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) purposes, which are set out in the AONB Management Plan.
 3. Local economic and social needs and opportunities not met elsewhere.
 4. Settlement patterns and the level of accessibility to service centres, markets and housing.
 5. The building is suitable for the proposed use without major re-building and would not require any significant alteration which would damage its fabric and character, or detract from the local characteristics and landscape quality of the area. Any necessary car parking provision should also not have an adverse impact on the setting of the building in the open countryside.
 6. The preservation of buildings of historic or architectural importance/interest, or which otherwise contributes to local character.

Proposals for the development and diversification of agricultural and other land-based rural businesses will be supported which meet the criteria set out in the National Planning Policy Framework and also that:

- Are consistent in scale and environmental impact with their rural location avoiding adverse impacts on sensitive habitats, Areas of Great Landscape Value and landscapes identified through landscape character assessments and the openness of the Green Belt.
- Conserve the landscape quality and scenic beauty of the Cranborne Chase and West Wiltshire Downs AONB, and comply with the provisions of the AONB Management Plan.
- Do not harm amenity and enjoyment of the countryside through the impact of noise and traffic generation.
- That minimise additional trips on the highway network and are accessible by sustainable modes other than the car.

Subject to compliance with criteria set out above acceptable uses for rural diversification include:

- Tourism
- Leisure and related activities
- Equestrian
- Small offices
- Light Manufacturing
- Renewable energy
- Retail (farm shops and pick your own)

Support will be given to new forms of working practices, which include the creation of live/work spaces in rural areas. The assessment of these proposals will be made in accordance with rural housing need and potential affordable housing exception sites as well as access to services.

The Safeguarding of Local Shops, Services and Facilities

16.16 Christchurch and East Dorset have a range of local commercial facilities that provide for the basic needs of the community, including shops, pubs, post offices etc. Most of these are in the urban area. Some rural communities, particularly in East Dorset lack convenient access to basic facilities. The rural settlements and villages are vulnerable to the loss of non profitable facilities.

16.17 Monitoring of the Christchurch and East Dorset Local Plans has demonstrated that maintaining retail uses has been important in maintaining the vitality and viability of local centres. Additionally the Joint Retail Study Update (2012) identifies the importance of shopping parades and village shops and that these facilities should be maintained as fulfilling a vital function for the community.

Policy PC5

Shops and Community Facilities in Local Centres and Villages

In local shopping areas and villages planning applications which propose improvements to the provision of shops which provide for people's day to day needs, leisure uses including public houses and facilities for local communities will be supported in principle.

The loss of existing retail premises, leisure and other local facilities will be resisted unless it is clearly demonstrated there is insufficient demand and it is not feasible and viable to support their continued existence and the loss would not result in a substantial decline in the range and quality of services for local people.