

Core Strategy Area Profile

Options for Consideration
Consultation

4th October – 24th December 2010

Christchurch Town Centre

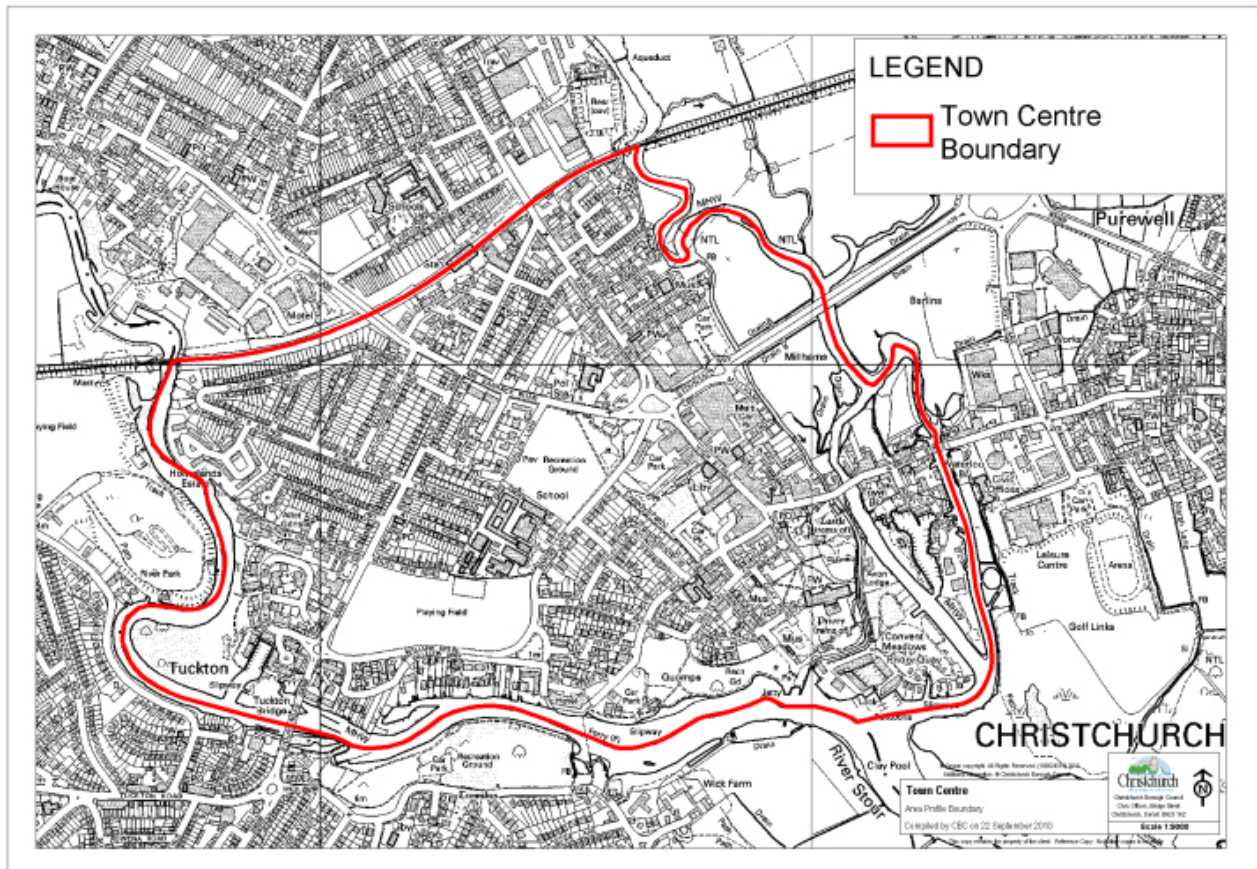


Prepared by Christchurch Borough Council and
East Dorset District Council as part of the Local Development
Framework

October 2010

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1.1 The town centre ward is clearly defined by geographic features: the railway to the north and river boundaries. It is varied in terms of character and type of development; the historic core located to the south of the A35, abuts the more suburban area of Wickfield Avenue and Stour Road to the east. The ward contains the commercial/retail centre of the Borough.



Town Centre Area Profile Boundary

Baseline data

	Town Centre ward	Christchurch Borough
Area of the ward	142 ha	5,043 ha
Ward Population estimated mid 2008	3,940	45,824
Population Age Structure (2008 mid-year estimates)		
0 – 15 years	560 (14%)	7,223 (16%)
16 –59 (F) / 16 – 64 (M)	2,030 (51.5%)	22,969 (50%)
60 (F) 65 (M) +	1,360 (34.5%)	15,632 (34%)
Deprivation Data		
Index of Multiple Deprivation (2007)	There are 30 Super Output Areas (SOAs) in Christchurch and the Town Centre ward has	Christchurch Borough is classified at 220 out of 354 UA/districts nationwide.

	<p>2 SOAs within its boundary - Bargates (8) and Priory (13). Priory is ranked at 21 and is in the first ten least deprived areas. Bargates has a higher deprivation score and is ranked 6th most deprived in the Borough.</p>	
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1.2 Sources

- 2001 Census data for Christchurch.
- Dorset Survey of Housing Need and Demand 2007- Christchurch
- Dorset Data Book 2008
- www.dorsetforyou.com

Strategic Issues

1.3 The town centre ward has an elderly population with a high proportion of pensioners, which is a common characteristic for all the wards in Christchurch. The large elderly population is likely to continue to grow, which will have implications for the provision of services for the elderly and their longer term care. The impact of this demographic will be a continuing low birth rate, causing a decline in the need for schools and youth related provision, but a possible higher demand for facilities for the elderly and local facilities such as shops and medical services.

2.1 National policy encourages diversity of uses in the town centres, emphasising the importance of adequate retail provision (Planning Policy Statement 1 and Planning Policy Statement 4).

2.2 In order to ensure the viability and competitiveness and a strong retail presence, the Local Plan designated Shopping Cores at Bargates, the Town Centre and Saxon Square, where change of use from retail premises to non-retail is restricted (Policy ES2). From regular monitoring it appears that the policy has been successful in maintaining a strong retail presence.

2.3 To secure a healthy balance of uses and to ensure vitality in the evening hours, Local Plan policy H11 designates areas within the town centre where loss of residential uses is restricted.

Accommodating growth

2.4 Even though the level of retail outlets across the Borough is sufficient to serve current local needs, the projected population growth and expenditure requires provision of additional A1 retail comparison floorspace (between 9,685 to 11,200sqm in the next 20 years, as set out in the NLP Retail Study 2008). Evidence suggests that Christchurch Town Centre has the best prospects of accommodating growth.

2.5 Alongside the projected requirements for retail the area will also be the focus for high density residential development as identified in the Local Plan and accompanying planning an design briefs. The Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment 2009 estimates that the Town Centre Ward has potential to accommodate 332 dwellings between 2009-2024.

2.6 Local Plan Policy ES5 identifies Land West of the High Street as a site for development for mainly shopping but to include residential, financial; or professional use, food and drink and leisure and entertainment uses. The site covers an area incorporating the Post Office site, the Cornfactor site and the Lanes.

2.7 The Post Office site, represents a good opportunity to deliver the required retail floorspace and high quality residential units in the short term.

2.8 The DrUITT Gardens Planning, Design and Development Framework (2005) seeks to create a new mixed use town centre development at the Lanes, Cornfactor, library and heritage centre site with an emphasis on retail, residential and community uses. The site has good potential to be redeveloped in the short to medium term.

2.9 In addition, the Town Centre Strategy (2003) identified opportunities for new mixed use development to take place in a number of key sites located in the heart of the town centre, principally:

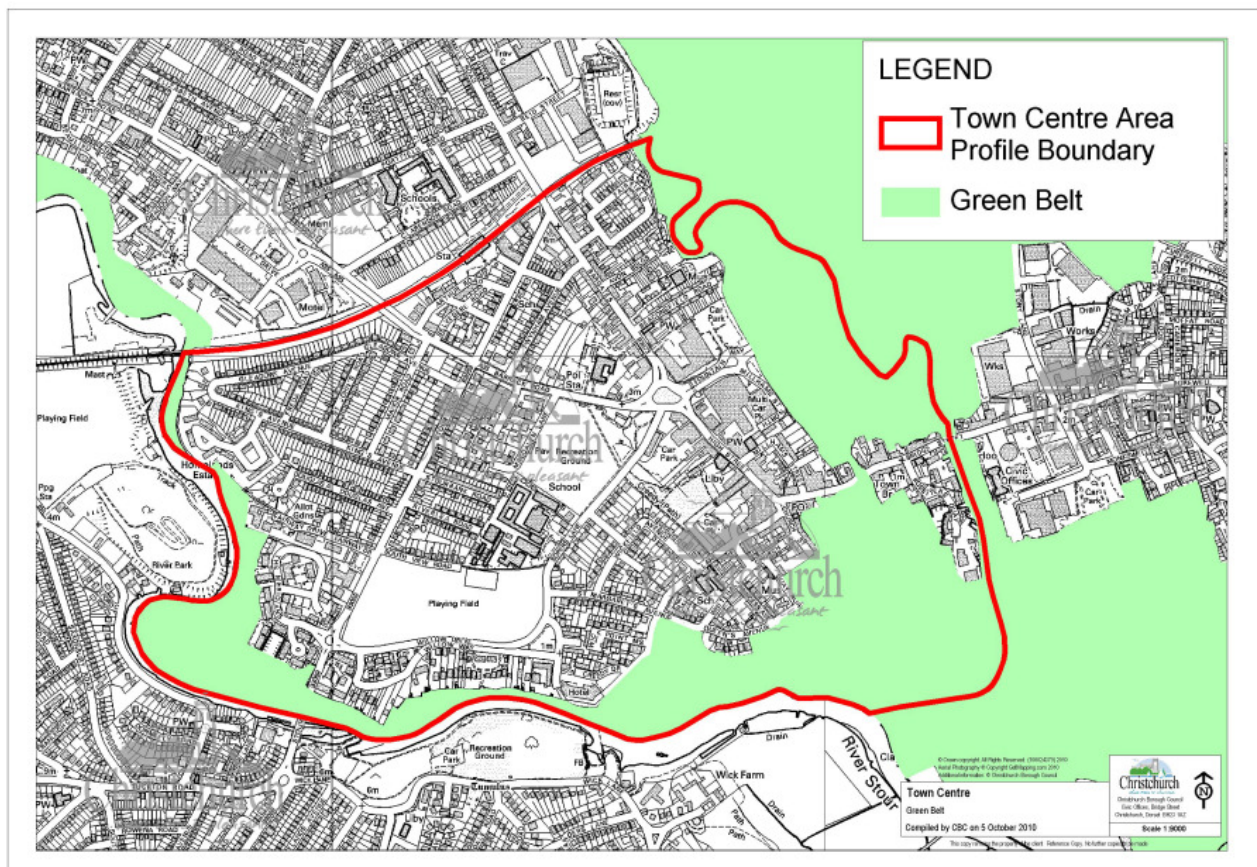
- The Magistrates Court site; and
- Saxon Square

Strategic issues

2.10 The town centre will be the centre for commercial and residential growth. The strategic issues for the ward will be to provide sufficient retail comparison floorspace to meet projected growth requirements and deliver well designed, high density residential development

Green Belt

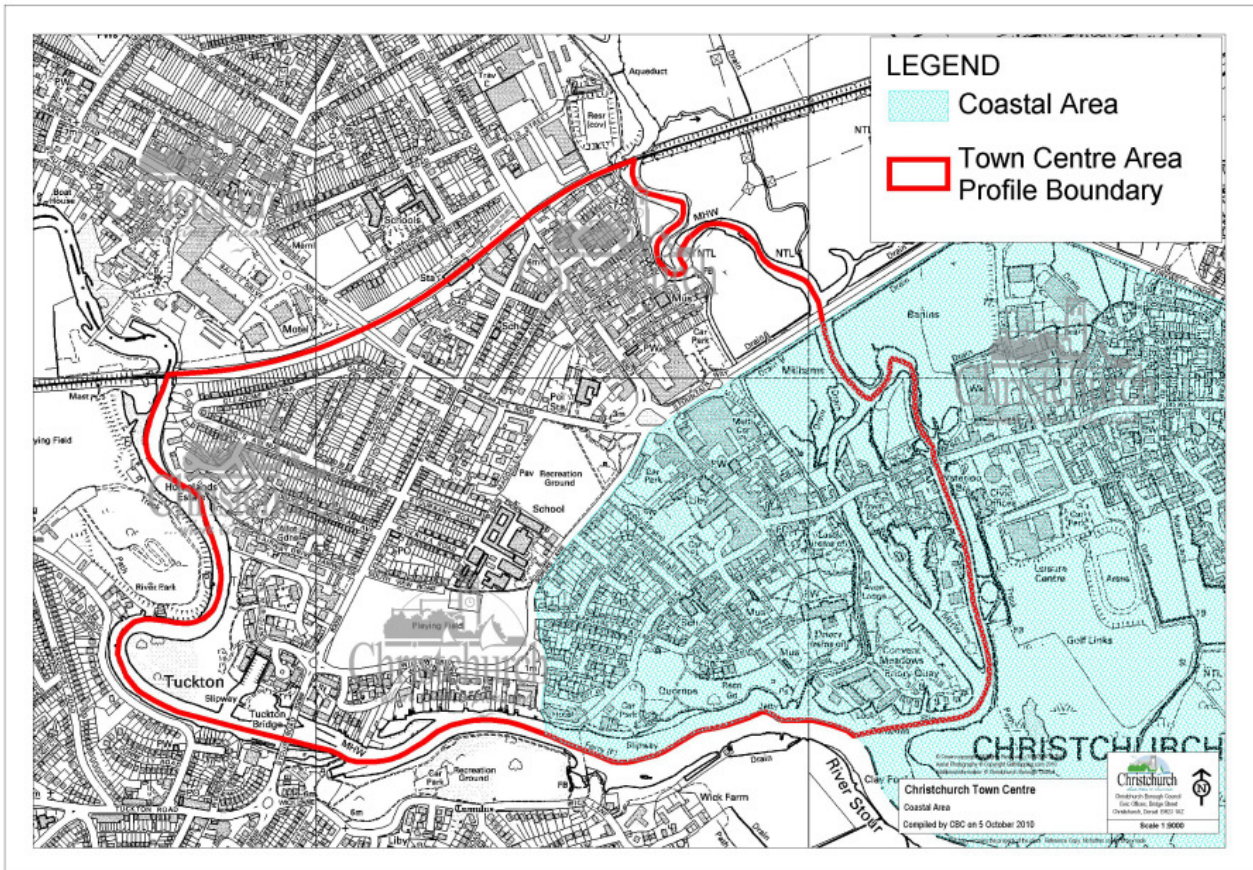
2.11 The ward is protected by the Green Belt, which forms a buffer zone to the east, west and south. The open land provides contrast to the compact urban area of the town centre and acts as transition space between the clusters of residential development in Highcliffe and Burton.



Town Centre Green Belt

Coastal Area

2.12 The designation protects the coastal strip in the south-eastern part of the ward against inappropriate development that could potentially distort the openness of the landscape and restrict access to the waterfront.



Town Centre Coastal Area

Strategic Issues

2.13 The Green Belt and Coastal Area act as a buffer zone, providing the town centre with a distinct setting and protecting the valuable landscape characteristics. Both designations should be maintained.

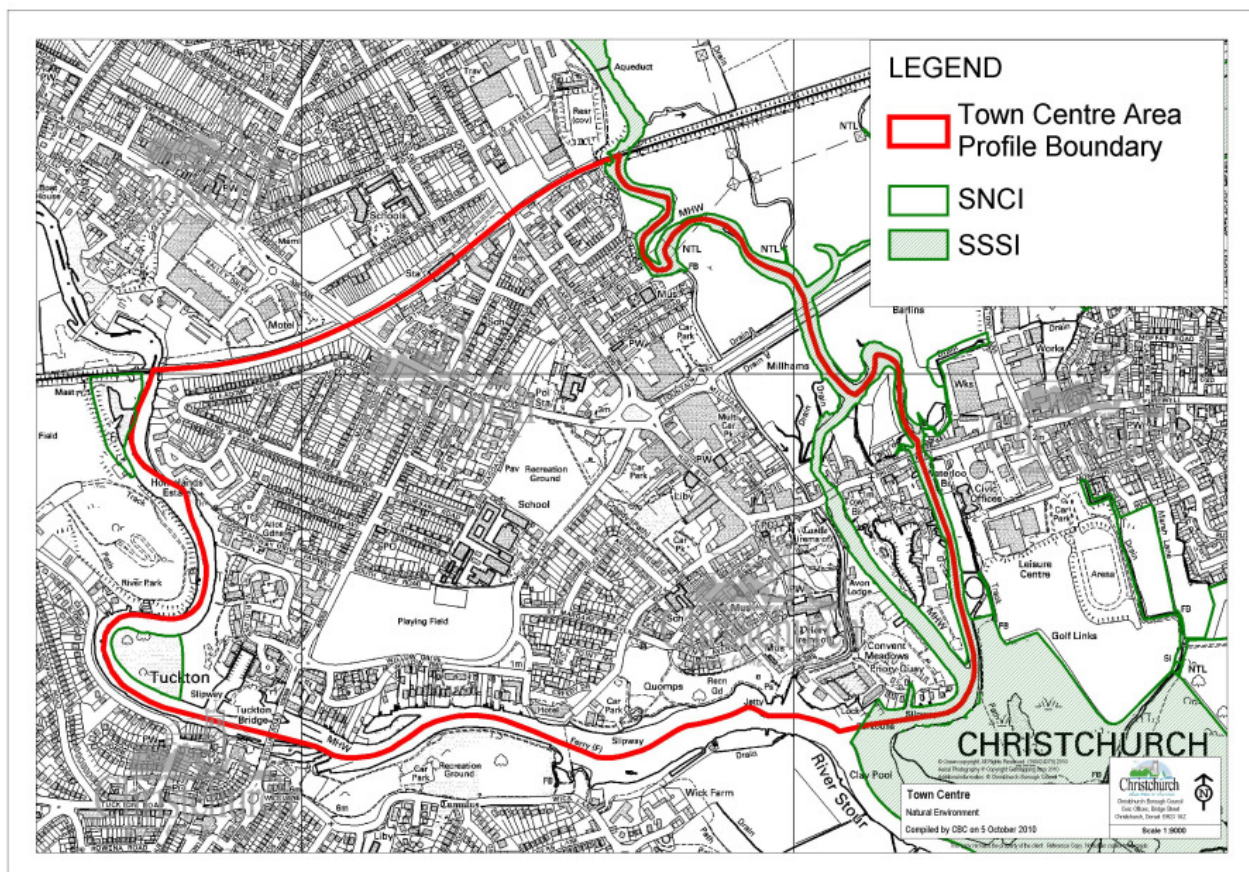
Natural Environment

2.14 The town centre is a densely built up part of the Borough. Nevertheless the open harbour and water meadows to the east and south provide a distinctive setting to the tightly knit urban core. These coastal areas are protected by international and national nature conservation designations.

2.15 The Avon Valley and the Town Common are designated Ramsar sites recognised for their important wetland and waterfowl habitats with a diversity of animal and plant species. The international designation overlaps with a Site of Special Scientific Interest designation (SSSI). The western edge by the harbour is a designated Site of Nature Conservation Interest (SNCI).

Strategic Issues

2.16 Public open spaces are a vital part of the landscape, that give the centre its distinct character and have an important nature conservation value. It is crucial therefore that those areas should continue to be afforded protection.

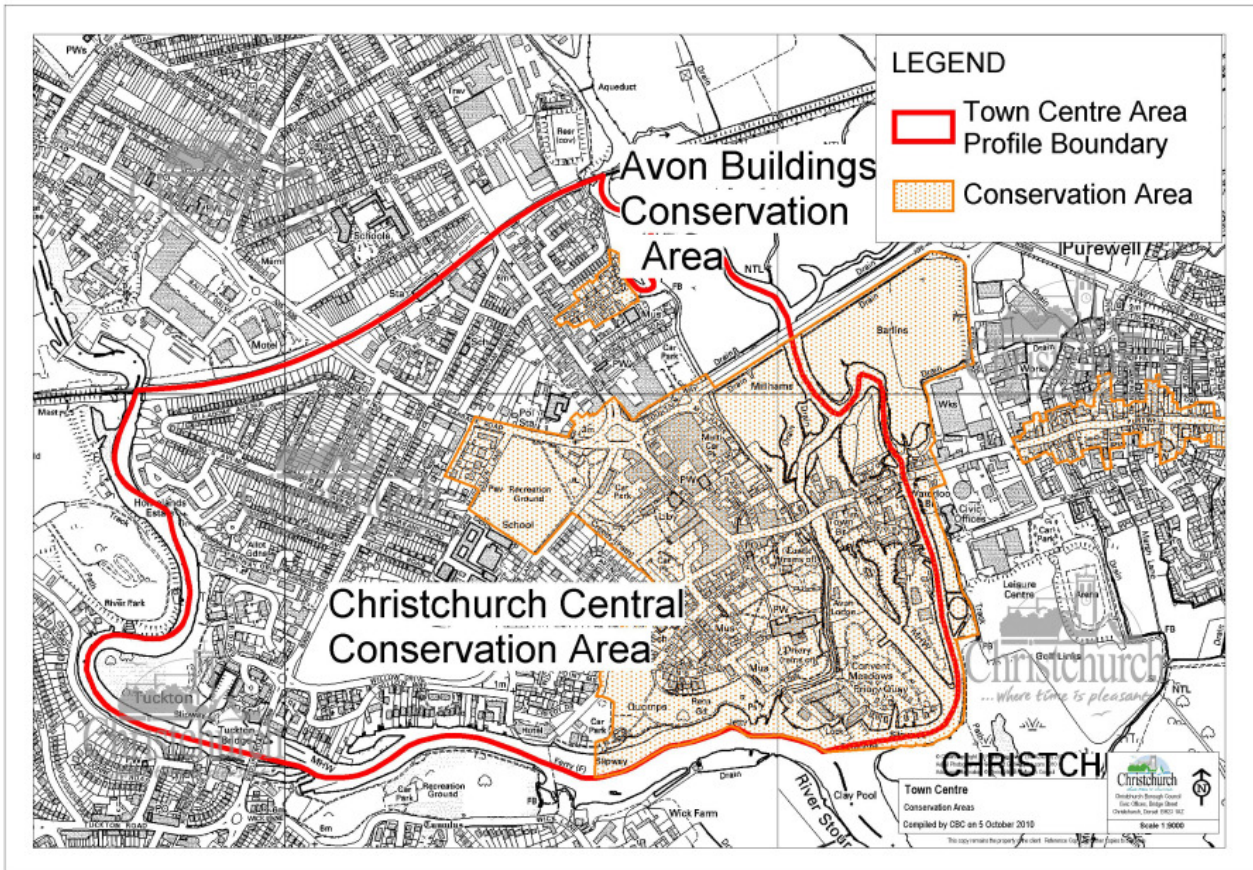


Town Centre Natural Environment

Historic Built Environment

2.17 Christchurch has a historic town centre, most of which is located in the Central Conservation Area, the biggest conservation area in the Borough.

2.18 The ward contains many statutory and locally listed buildings, 5 of which are Grade I listed (Christchurch Priory, Constable's House, Waterloo Bridge, Town Bridge and The Castle). The latter two are also designated Scheduled Ancient Monuments.



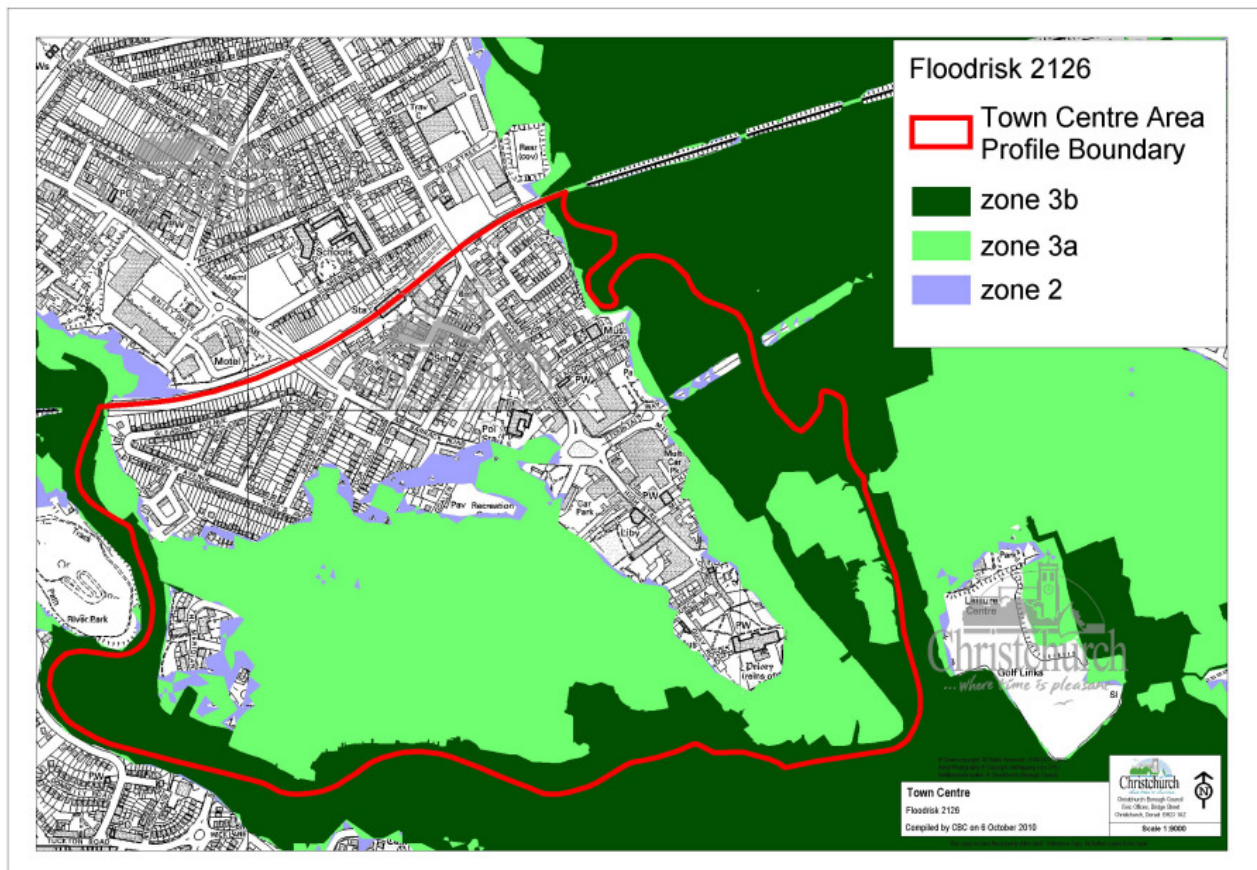
Town Centre Conservation Areas

Strategic Issues

2.19 Taking into account the need to accommodate retail and residential growth in the ward, the strategic issue is to protect and enhance the integrity of historic environment and safeguard the area's local distinctiveness. Due to its riverbank setting, attractive environment and richness of historic buildings, the historic centre draws in visitors and is a popular tourist destination, contributing to economic growth.

Flooding

2.20 The Strategic Flood Risk Level 2 Assessment (2009) revealed that a considerable part of the town centre ward lies in SFRA flood zone 3a (Stour Road, Wick Lane and Bridge Street are worst affected) and 3b.



Town Centre Floodrisk 2126

2.21 PPS 25 only permits ‘water compatible uses’ in zones 3b (which in the town centre could include amenity open space, nature conservation and biodiversity, outdoor sports and recreation and essential facilities such as changing rooms).

2.22 Land located in zone 3a could accommodate ‘less vulnerable uses’ which in the town centre could include buildings used for: shops; financial, professional and other services; restaurants and cafés; hot food take-aways; offices; general industry; storage and distribution; non-residential institutions not included in ‘more vulnerable’; and assembly and leisure.

2.23 ‘More vulnerable uses’ suitable for a town centre location (hospitals; residential institutions such as residential care homes, children’s homes, social services homes, prisons and hostels; buildings used for: dwelling houses; drinking establishments; nightclubs; and hotels.; non-residential uses for health services, nurseries and educational establishments) could be developed in zone 3a providing they pass the exception test.

Strategic Issues

2.24 Flood risk will have a negative effect on growth, limiting opportunities for commercial and residential development in the ward. In areas at risk of flooding in zone 3b, no net increase in dwellings or increase in commercial floorspace is permitted. In zone 3a an increase in commercial uses would be permitted providing it passes the sequential test.

General Community facilities

3.1 The town centre performs a number of important functions; it provides a range of shopping, leisure, entertainment, recreation and employment uses.

- There is a library and a theatre, staging plays, events and acts as a cinema (the Regent Centre). Both are located on the High Street.
- The post office on Church Street.
- There is a good selection of restaurants, mainly located along Church Street and seven public houses, located along the main transport routes (The Railway on Stour Road, The Royalty Inn on Bargates, Club Epic on Bargates, The Ship Inn on the High Street, Soho Bar on Church Street and Ye Old George Inn on Castle Street, Dukes Inn on Barrack Road).
- The town centre enjoys relative good provision of public halls and meeting rooms, including the Druitt Hall, the Baptist Church Hall on Bargates and the Mayor's Parlour on the High Street. There are plans to rebuild a community centre on the site of the Druitt Hall and a fund raising scheme for the project is currently being prepared.
- There is no petrol station within the ward's boundary. However, there are two located in close vicinity (Bridge Street and Barrack Road).

Health facilities

3.2 There is one GP surgery serving the town centre (the Stour Road Surgery) and one pharmacy in Saxon Square. There could be potential need for another surgery/pharmacy in the centre.

Education facilities

3.3 There is one primary school in the area (The Priory CE Primary School) and one secondary (the Twynham Community Comprehensive). Due to the demographic profile of the area and projected population/housing growth, no need to provide additional education facilities has been identified.

Sport/recreation facilities

3.4 Even though the town centre ward does not have any indoor sports facilities, there is the Two Riversmeet Leisure Centre complex, located on the eastern fringe of the ward. The centre offers a wide range of facilities, including a fitness suite, swimming pool, badminton and squash courts and a BMX track and an outside football pitch. The East Dorset Indoor Bowling Club is located next to the leisure centre. There is a fitness studio 'Women's Workout' located on the High Street.

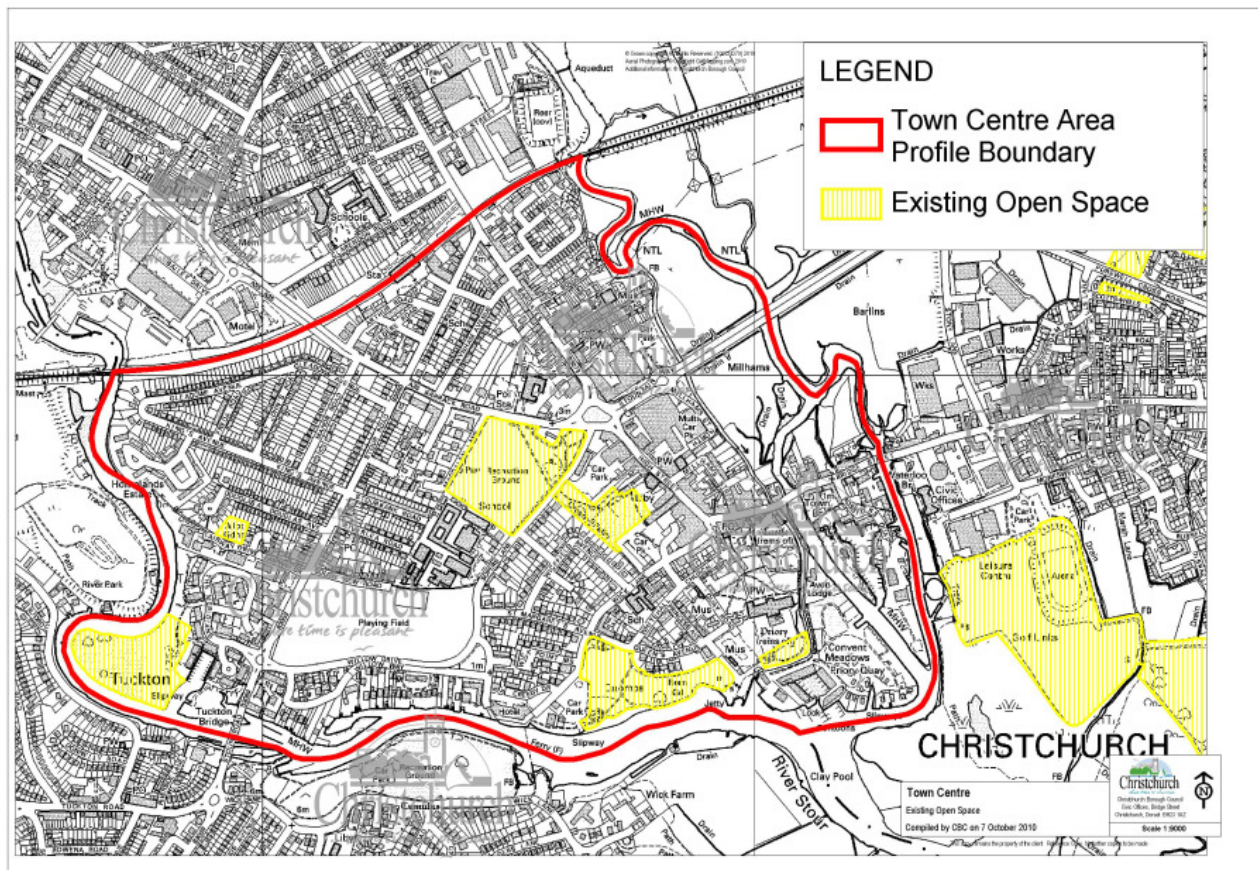
3.5 There is a private owned bowling green in the historic core of the centre.

Green Infrastructure

3.6 There are several designated gardens and open spaces in the town centre, which contribute to the character of the area. These include the New Zealand Gardens, Barrack Road Recreational Ground, Twynham School Playing Fields, Town Quay, The Quomps, Church/Churchyard/Riverside (Avon), open space adjacent to the Constable's House and Druitt Gardens.

3.7 The 2007 Open Space Audit stated that there is sufficient open space provision in the town centre. However, the study recommended improvements be carried out to Druitt Gardens, which are at present perceived to be an unattractive and threatening environment.

3.8 There is significant potential to enhance the quality of public open spaces in the town centre, particularly Druitt Gardens and areas by the water's edge as there is no direct pedestrian access to key sections of the water frontage and boating facilities around the core area.



Town Centre Existing Open Space

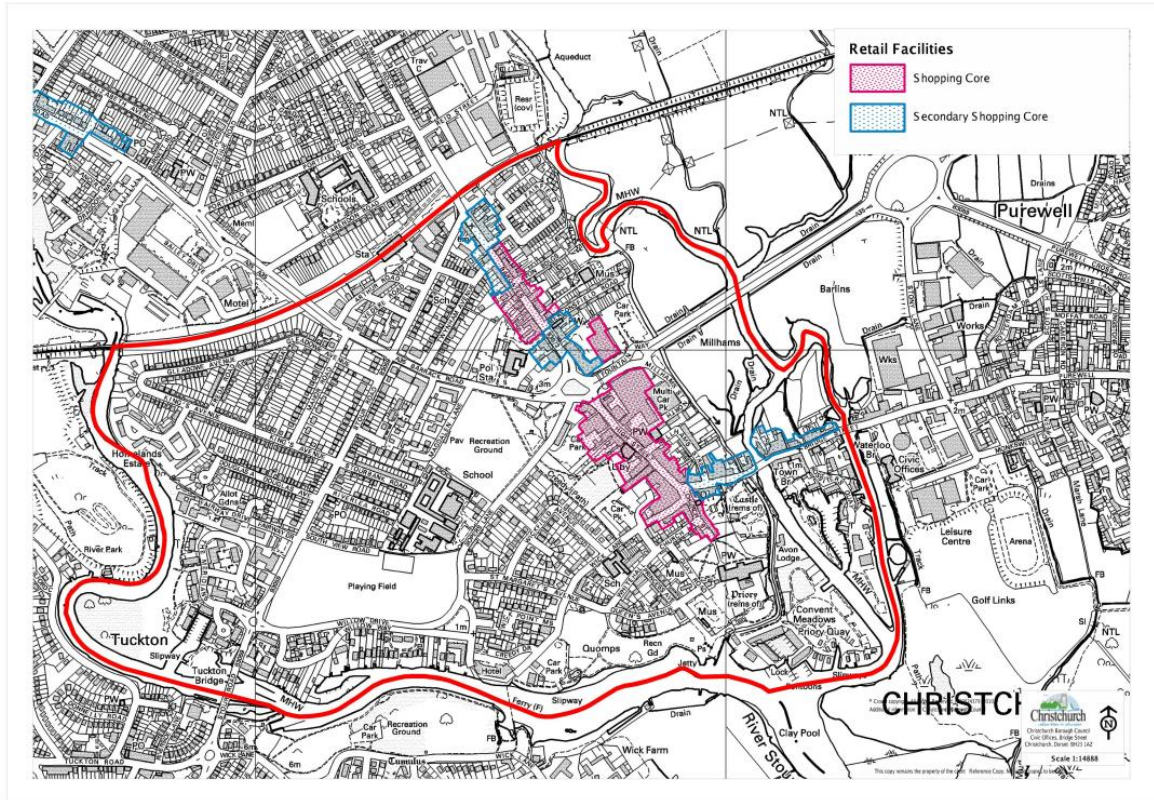
Retail facilities

3.9 The ward contains Christchurch town centre, which is the main shopping destination in the Borough.

3.10 Trade mix

3.11 There are 209 ground floor non-residential units. The centre has a good variety of comparison shops, including a number of national multiples such as Argos, Boots, New Look and WH Smith. In addition, the town centre has three large food stores: Waitrose, Marks & Spencer and the Co-operative. There is a limited or no representation of retailers in certain sectors, particularly butchers, off licenses, clothing shops and leisure goods shops.

3.12 The main shopping area is concentrated along Bargates and the High Street, with some shops located in the Saxon Centre and Saxon Square. The A35 severs the High Street from Bargates dividing the shopping area into two distinct parts, which has a negative effect on the viability of the Bargates shopping area by reducing footfall.



Town Centre: Retail Frontages

3.13 The majority of units are traditional in style, although modern units can be found both at Saxon Square and the Saxon Centre. The units vary considerably in size, from small units mainly located along the High Street and Saxon Square.

Strategic Issues

3.14 The 2009 Retail Assessment suggests that up to 11,200 sqm of additional comparison floorspace will need to be provided in the borough. A large proportion of this is likely to be accommodated in the town centre (see breakdown in table below). It will be crucial to identify suitable development sites.

Christchurch Comparison Floorspace Projections- Baseline Population		
	Short term projections 2007-2011	Long term projections 2007-2026
Christchurch	1,210	6,899
Highcliffe	139	770
Christchurch retail warehouses	348	2,016

Christchurch Comparison Floorspace Projections- High Population Growth		
	Short term projections 2007-2011	Long term projections 2007-2026
Christchurch	1,210	6,899
Highcliffe	139	770

Christchurch retail warehouses	348	2,016
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3.15 Source: NLP Retail Assessment 2008, Volume 1

3.16 Also the issue of the physical severance of the two shopping areas by the A35 needs to be addressed.

Issues from Christchurch Community Strategy

3.17 Christchurch Community Partnership is in the process of producing a sustainable community strategy (SCS) for the Borough. A series of vision seminars with service providers and local residents have been held in 2009/10 to inform the production of a common vision for the SCS and Christchurch and East Dorset Core Strategy. Issues raised in these seminars that are relevant to Town Centre have been summarised below.

3.18 *Town centre environment*

- Walking along the High Street is often difficult due to narrow pavements.
- Distinctiveness of the town centre is very important and needs to be retained.

3.19 *The role of the town centre / mix of retail outlets*

- In terms of retail, the town centre needs to acknowledge its unique role and sell itself for what it is. There is some scope for re-development and but it cannot compete with retail centres such as Bournemouth, Poole and Castlepoint.
- General agreement that there should be a mix of national retailers and independent shops to cater for different demographics of shopper.
- Creative industries are a key sector for development in the sub-region and could be encouraged in Christchurch town centre – e.g. buildings used by artists, or studios rented by creative people as this all adds to the character of the town.
- Provision of more health care facilities in the town centre was suggested so that people don't need to travel long distances. At the moment there is only a pharmacy.

3.20 *The future of Saxon Square*

- The Saxon Square car park is an unattractive place and people are discouraged from using it. This could potentially be redeveloped as an improved car park.
- Saxon Square itself needs improving as a shopping centre.

3.21 *Public transport / Transport infrastructure requirements*

- Traffic congestion on roads leading to the town centre puts people off from coming and needs to be tackled.
- Through traffic needs to be removed.
- Creating a better environment for pedestrians in the High Street should be supported. One option raised was withdrawing cars but still allowing public transport and bicycles.
- Option of removing buses from the High Street was put forward.
- A bus terminus at Saxon Square car park was supported.
- Two way traffic in Wick Lane is essential and this needs to be done first.
- Need to retain good bus access to Christchurch. It has been raised that there are good links with Bournemouth and Poole but less so with the eastern part of Christchurch.

3.22 *The impact of residential development on the town centre*

- Need to preserve the historic town centre from intrusion of residential traffic if there is an increase in residential development. However, have to cater for the needs of people living in the area.
- There may be an impact on public car parking spaces if these are used by residents.

Issues from Place survey 2008

3.23 The Christchurch Place Survey 2008 was a postal survey of residents and the analysis was broken down into 7 neighbourhood areas. Main issues relating to the Town Centre ward are set out below:

- Residents identified the top three priorities for improvement in the ward are the level of traffic congestion (67%); activities for teenagers (35%) and road and pavement repairs (40%).
- The proportion of residents that considered traffic congestion needs improvement in the ward is much higher than the borough average (58%).
- A very high number of respondents considered that public transport needs improvement by neighbourhood area, which is higher than the borough average of 33%.

4.1 The housing stock in the town centre is varied, with many older properties located in or close to the town centre. On the south-eastern fringes of the Victorian core, the housing represents a varied mix of detached and semi-detached houses from the turn of the century. Inter war housing located along Leigh Road, Stour Road and Wickfield Avenue, radiates from the centre and is built at a higher density than other areas in the Borough.

Tenure

4.2 Whilst most housing is owner occupied (74.9%), Christchurch town centre has a greater variety of tenure compared to other wards in the borough. There is a comparatively higher number of affordable housing and privately rented units.

Tenure of Housing	Town Centre ward		Christchurch Borough	
	No.	%	No	%
Owner Occupied (no mortgage)	990	47.7	10,660	49.6
Owner Occupied (with mortgage)	563	27.2	6,844	31.8
Social Rented	289	13.9	2,616	12.2
Private Rented	233	11.2	1,380	6.4
Total	2,705	100.0	21,500	100.0

Dwelling Type

4.3 The ward has a comparatively high number of flats. The northern edge of the Central Conservation Area contains significant areas where the historic buildings have been replaced by more modern, high density developments.

Dwelling type	Town Centre ward		Christchurch Borough	
	No.	%	No	%
Detached House	446	16.6	4,157	19.3
Semi detached house	345	16.6	3,260	15.2
Terraced house	348	16.8	3,753	17.5
Detached bungalow	116	5.6	4,980	23.2

Semi or terraced bungalow	0	0	880	4.1
Flat	820	39.5	4,471	20.8
Total	2,075	100.0	21,500	100.0

Household Type/ Household Size

4.4 In the town centre, over 86% of households are composed of adults without children, and of these, over 60% are of pensionable age, which is above national average. This indicates that there is no future demand to provide for more schools, should the number of households continue to grow without children.

Type of Households	Town Centre Ward		Christchurch Borough	
	No.	%	No	%
Single Pensioners	549	26.5	4,585	21.3
2 or more pensioners	419	20.2	4,299	20
Single non-pensioners	280	15.5	2,352	10.9
2 or more adults - no children	555	26.7	6,485	30.2
Lone parent	29	1.4	677	3.1
2 adults + 1 child	140	6.7	1,347	6.3
2+ adults and 2+ children	103	5.0	1,755	8.2
Total	2,075	100.0	21,500	100.0

Household size	Town Centre ward		Christchurch Borough	
	No	%	No	%
One person	829	40	6,937	32.3
Two People	900	43.4	9,190	42.7
Three people	153	7.4	2,297	10.7
Four people	193	9.3	3,076	14.3
Total	2,075	100.0	21,500	100.0

Overcrowding / Under-Occupation

4.5 Whilst overcrowding is relatively uncommon in Christchurch (in the Town Centre ward amounting to merely 0.7%), the incidence of 'under-occupation' is much higher. At 34.6%, the rate of under-occupation is little below the Borough average of 37.3%.

Overcrowding and Under-occupation (Fordham 2008)				
	Town Centre ward		Christchurch Borough	
	No	%	No.	%

Overcrowded	14	0.7	162	0.8
OK	1,344	64.8	13,326	62
Under-occupied	718	34.6	8,011	37.3
Total	2,075	100.0	21,500	100.0

Households in Unsuitable Housing

4.6 Housing can be unsuitable because of its size, type, location, condition or cost. The table below illustrates that almost 97% of households are considered to be in suitable housing.

Number of Households in Unsuitable Housing (Fordham 2008)				
	Town Centre		Christchurch Borough	
	No.	%	No	%
In unsuitable housing	64	3.1	996	4.6
Not in unsuitable housing	2,011	96.9	20,504	95.4
Total	2,075	100.0	21,500	100.0

Housing Need

4.7 Housing need is defined as the number of households who lack their own housing or live in unsuitable housing or who cannot afford to meet their needs in the market. The following table illustrates the level of housing need in the Christchurch Town centre ward. 1.4% households in the ward have been classified as being in need, which is equal to the Borough average.

Number of households currently in need (Fordham, 2008)				
	Town Centre Ward		Christchurch Borough	
	No.	%	No	%
In need	28	1.4	299	1.4
Not in need	2,047	98.6	21,201	98.6
Total	2,075	100.0	21,500	100.0

House Prices

4.8 House prices are high relative to income in Christchurch, and with many people of high income retiring or choosing to live in the area, this has raised property prices. It has led to a very large affordability gap for those on lower incomes living in the area. Based on the figures presented below, for a person with an average salary of £25,000, they will need to find 12x their salary to buy a mid range terraced property. For those on lower incomes, the situation is far worse, and the need for affordable housing is therefore acute and growing annually.

4.9 Land Registry average prices for Christchurch Borough (July-September 2009)

Dwelling type	Average Price
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Detached	£318,622
Semi-detached	£224,140
Terraced	£302,078
Flats/Maisonettes	£163,966

Special needs and Older Persons Households

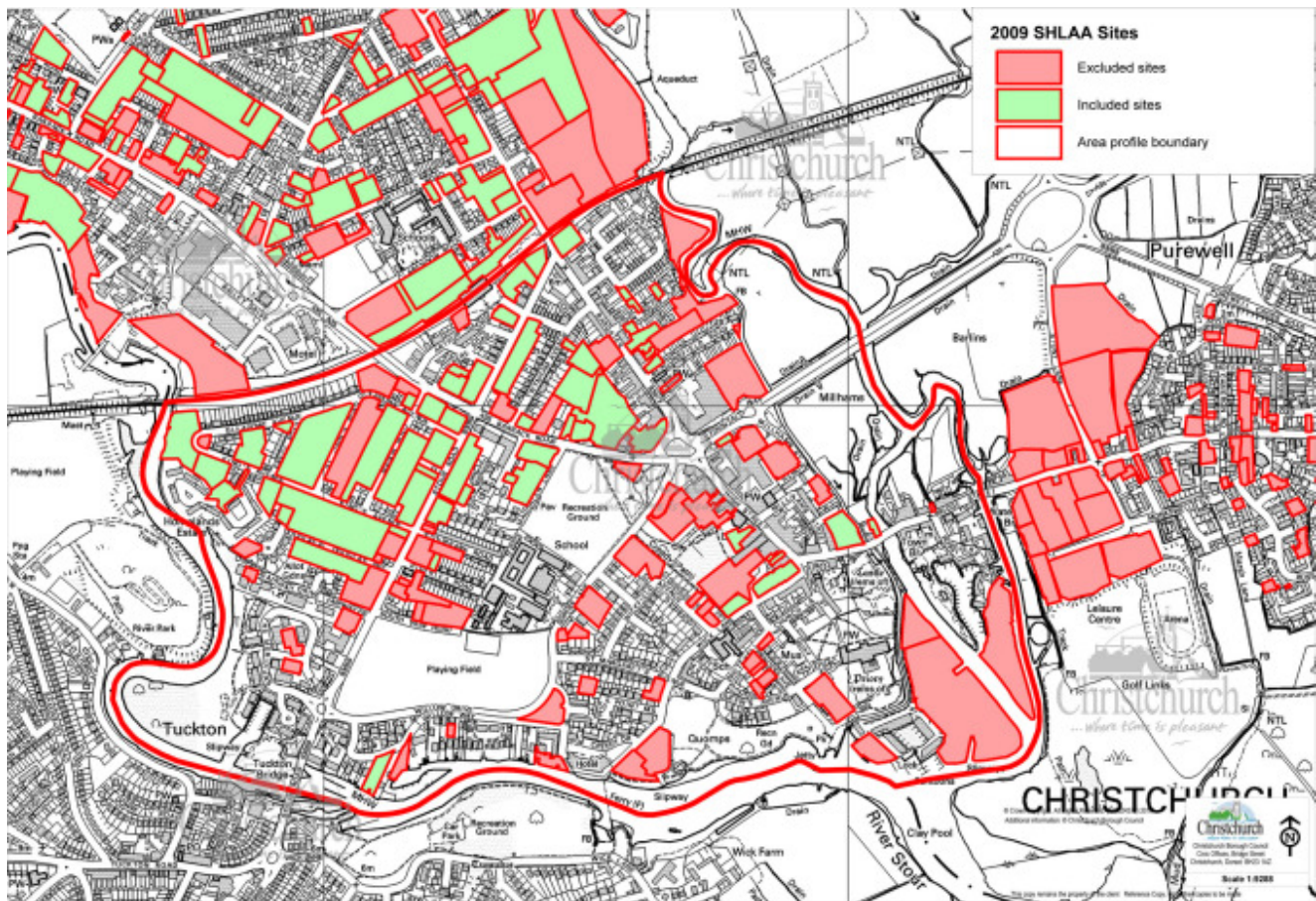
4.10 Households with Special Needs are those where improvements are required to accommodation and services to allow those residents to remain in their own homes.

Location of special needs households (Fordham 2008)				
Type	Town Centre Ward		Christchurch Borough	
	No.	%	No	%
Special needs	562	27.1	4,983	23.2
Non-special needs	1,513	72.9	16,517	76.8
Total	2,075	100.0	21,500	100.0

4.11 With an ageing population, there is and will increasingly be, a higher demand for special needs accommodation and retirement flats for the elderly with support services. These will need to be provided by the private and housing association sectors. It can be seen from the table, that there is a significant number of special needs households in the town centre, higher than the Borough average.

Potential for residential development

4.12 It is projected that the Town Centre ward will accommodate 332 dwellings by 2024 (Christchurch Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment 2009). This low number is a direct consequence of the outcomes of the Strategic Flood Risk Assessment 2009 (SFRA), which located a vast part of the ward in zone 3a, severely limiting opportunities for residential development in those areas.



Town Centre SHLAA sites

4.13 Sites that present the best development opportunities include

- 127-133 Bargates
- 1 Stour Road/ 3 Stour Road
- Arcade and former Royal Mail sorting office
- Magistrates Court/ Police station site

4.14 Residential development on the two latter sites will be delivered alongside a significant amount of retail development and also include community uses, creating a mixed use environment.

Strategic Issues

4.15 Due to a high level of accessibility, the town centre has potential for residential development, at higher densities than elsewhere in the Borough. The demographic profile suggests that the priority for the ward should be to deliver smaller units, to accommodate single and two person households.

4.16 Also the cost of housing is very high relative to income. This means that younger people and young families are unlikely to move here at present resulting in an unbalanced population. The provision of adequate supply of affordable housing is therefore crucial.

Employment Activity in the ChristchurchTown Centre Ward (Census 2001)		
Economic Activity	Number or %	Dorset
Total number of economically active people	1,628	178,519
% employed part time	19.5	20.9
% employed full time	55.1	55.3

% self employed	19.3	17.6
% unemployed	2.6	3.1
% full-time students with jobs	3.5	3.1
Skills		
% High skill	44.9	39.7
% Intermediate skill	40.4	41.6
% Low skill	14.7	18.7
Qualifications		
% with no qualifications	26.4	26.2
% with higher qualifications	20.0	18.3

Overview

Christchurch Borough as a whole has approximately 2,020 firms, excluding the self employed, with a fifth of these located in the town centre (420 firms, employing 3,200 people) (Source: Annual Business Inquiry 2007, ONS).

The biggest employers in the town centre ward are Christchurch Borough Council and John Reid and Sons.

Office occupancy

Office occupancy level in the Borough is good, although the majority of offices in the town centre comprise business activities that are incidental to a town centre, mainly local and small organisations, such as solicitors and accountants. Much of the office premises consist of small suites above ground floor retail premises.

The Christchurch and East Dorset Employment Review Study Stage 2 concluded that there isn't a strong market for offices in the town centre. The main market for office development is located in Bournemouth and Poole. However, the town centre could accommodate some small scale office development.

Tourism

Tourism is a key part of the local economy in the Borough and the Town Centre with it's historic core and tranquil waterfront setting remains one of the biggest attractions. According to the Annual Business Inquiry 2007, four per cent of Christchurch's 2,020 businesses are in leisure and tourism (about 90 firms) and about four per cent of employed people work in tourism or leisure related businesses (about 700 people). Many more businesses, especially shops and restaurants rely significantly on tourism trade.

Employment Area Targets

The main employment sites are located outside the town centre and include the Bournemouth International Airport site, the former BAE site and industrial parks located along Somerford Road and Stony Lane. The Town Centre is not envisaged to make significant contribution to overall Borough land requirement. Some limited office development opportunities may come forward.

Strategic Issues

Expansion of retail is planned for the centre especially in the following sites, identified in the NLP retail study as having good potential for development for mixed used schemes:

- Arcade and former Royal Mail sorting office;
- Magistrates Court/ Police station site
- Saxon Square
- Vacant Land Rear of High Street;
- the Lanes and
- Land adjoining Royalty Inn.

This will create additional jobs and boost the local economy.

6.1 The A35, B3059 and B3347 run through the centre of Christchurch. All are major through routes carrying heavy traffic loads. The A35 links the Borough with Bournemouth and Southampton.

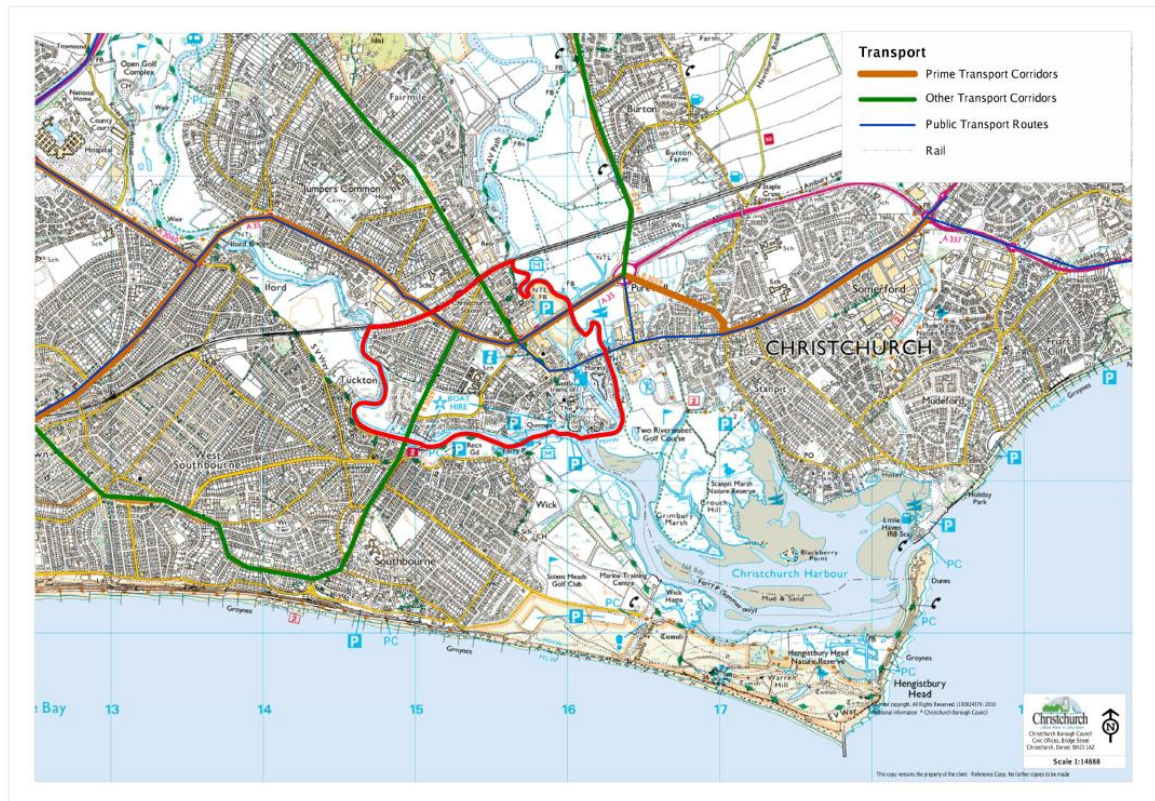
Car ownership

6.2 The Christchurch HNDS Fordham Research 2007 indicates that 21.6% of households in the ward have no car; 48,3% have 1 car; 25% have 2 cars; and 5.1% have 3 or more cars.

Rail

6.3 Christchurch Rail Station is located on the edge of the town centre. The line provides frequent services to Weymouth, via Bournemouth, Poole and Wareham; northwards towards Basingstoke and Reading and north eastwards towards London Waterloo, via Southampton.

6.4 There is a good public transport network serving the town centre, providing links within the Borough and with surrounding settlements. A considerable number of buses travel down the High Street, providing frequent services to Bournemouth town centre and Somerford (routes 1a, 1b and 1c run every 5 - 10 minutes). The frequency of services connecting the centre with other areas of the borough (Burton, Mudeford and Highcliffe) is lower with typically one service every half hour to an hour.



Town Centre Transport Network

Transport infrastructure/public transport improvements

6.5 The 2009 Dorset Transport Plan sets out the following improvements for the town centre

- A35 - 'Total Route Management' - measures to improve traffic flow and safety which will include installation of traffic signals at Fountains Roundabout, congestion monitoring and Variable Message Signs (VMS)
- B3073 (Bargates, Stour Road, Fairmile Road) - installation of traffic signals with pedestrian facilities.
- Town Centre improvements - this will include environmental enhancements carried out to the High Street and will be informed by the outputs of the SEDMMS study.

Strategic Issues

6.6 The townscape is affected by the presence of major thorough routes which spur off the A35: Bargates, Barrack Road and Stour Road, linking the Borough with Bournemouth. These routes all connect with the intrusive junction arrangement at Fountains Roundabout, which severs the town centre into two distinctive parts which has a negative effects on the footfalls at Bargates shopping area.

6.7 Taking into account the highly accessible location, car ownership levels in the ward are not sustainable and more has to be done to encourage use of public transport.

7.1 The strategic issues for the ward will be to provide sufficient retail comparison floorspace to meet projected growth requirements and deliver well designed, high density residential development that will contribute to meeting housing targets prescribed by the Regional Spatial Strategy for the South West. The objective will be to create a distinctive and attractive town centre, containing a balanced mix of uses. However, development potential in the ward may be limited by character constraints and flood risk issues.

7.2 Reduction of traffic and delivery of affordable housing in the ward should also be seen as priorities.