

# **Core Strategy Area Profile**

Options for Consideration  
Consultation

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## **East Dorset Rural Area**



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

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## 1 Area Overview

**1.1** The rural area of East Dorset is made up of the villages and rural area outside of the main urban settlements of the the District, which form part of the South East Dorset Conurbation.

**1.2** The villages can be divided into two types, the smaller villages of Chalbury, Edmondsham, Furzehill, Gaunt's Common, Gussage All Saints, Gussage St Michael, Hinton Martell, Hinton Parva, Holt, Horton, Long Crichel, Moor Crichel, Pamphill, Shapwick, Wimborne St Giles, Witchampton and Woodlands and the four larger villages of Sturminster Marshall, Cranborne, Alderholt and Sixpenny Handley have a larger range of facilities.

**1.3** The southerly villages from Edmondsham southwards to Holt and Pamphill are constrained by the South East Dorset Green Belt while the more northerly and easterly ones from Pentridge southwards to Sturminster Marshall fall within the Cranborne Chase and West Wiltshire Downs Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty.

## 2 Baseline Data

**2.1** The total population in the 2001 census for the smaller villages was 5,613. Holt is the largest of these villages with a population of 1,265. The next biggest is Pamphill with a population of 704. The smallest is Hinton Parva at 56. The remaining villages range from 140 to 575.

**2.2** Cranborne (779) and Sixpenny Handley (1,175) both have smaller populations than Holt. However, Holt has a dispersed settlement pattern with few facilities whilst both Cranborne and Sixpenny Handley are more compact and have a range of facilities. Sturminster Marshall has a population of 1,895 and a substantial employment area whilst Alderholt has the largest population at 3,113.

**2.3** These four larger villages show similar population structures in the 2001 Census. The 0-15 age group varies from 20% to 23%, the 16-64 age group varies from 59% to 65% and over 65s from 13% to 20%.

**2.4** The population structures in these villages show some variation. The 0-15 age group shows a range from 9% in Gussage All Saints to 25% in Gussage St Michael, the 16-64 band varies from 54% to 73% and the 65 and over age group from 7% in Hinton Parva to 27% in Gussage All Saints. The average across these small villages is 18% for 0-15s, 63% for 16-64 and 17% for 65 and over.

**2.5** The district figures for 2001 are somewhat different for both the larger and smaller villages. The 0-15 age range across the district is 17.1%, the 16-64 figure is 57.6% and the 65+ figure is 25.4%. All the larger villages have therefore a higher number of children and of adults under 65 with a corresponding lower figure for those of retirement age and this is repeated when the average for the smaller villages is compared. Individual villages show some variation.

**2.6** The health of the population in the 2001 Census mirrors the age range information. The figures for those with a long term limiting illness are lower than the East Dorset (18.4%) and County (19.2%) figures. The higher figures are around 17% for Hinton Parva, Gussage All Saints and Sixpenny Handley. Hinton Martell and Long Crichel record 11.1% with the remaining larger villages being between the two extremes. Unpaid carers also vary from the County (10.7%) and district (11.1%) figures. Gussage All Saints, which also recorded a high number of those with a long term illness, recorded 18.8% whilst Long Crichel recorded 6.2%.

**2.7** Alderholt shows a rapid increase in population in 1981, with Sixpenny Handley showing an increase in 1991. The populations of Holt and Sturminster Marshall have increased less dramatically with increases from 845 to 1,290 and 899 to 1,810 between 1921 and 2001. Cranborne has seen much less expansion with a small rise from 676 to 770 between 1921 and 2001.

**2.8** There is a marked difference across the rural area. The Super Output Area (SOA) multiple indices for Pamphill and Shapwick is 115 out of 247 SOAs across the county. Crane scored 132 and the Allen Valley 159. Alderholt is made up of two SOAs, West recorded 132 with East at 232. Sixpenny Handley is at 181 and Sturminster Marshall at 225. Crane and Pamphill and Shapwick score poorly for income, employment and education and skills. Crane also has a low score for health. By contrast, Holt is in second place at 246.

**2.9** Whilst Alderholt, Cranborne, Sixpenny Handley and Sturminster Marshall are large enough to provide a range of local services including playing fields, community halls, pubs and shops, many of the villages are small and relatively remote, especially those to the north and east of the district. Few have a recognisable core at the centre and are often more isolated with poor bus services with some villages lacking a daily bus service.

**2.10** Some of the villages have first schools with pupils feeding into middle schools in Cranborne, Colehill, Wimborne, Corfe Mullen and Ferndown. Secondary schools are in Wimborne and Ferndown though pupils in Corfe Mullen and Sturminster Marshall may go to Corfe Hills School within Poole.

**2.11** Local employment is frequently limited although Sturminster Marshall has a substantial employment area and Sixpenny Handley has a small group of workshops. Other small scale employment is available locally often in barn conversions but there is no guarantee that the jobs there are taken by local people. Most will commute either within the district or to the conurbation of Poole and Bournemouth or to Hampshire. Those in the southerly “Green Belt” villages will be better located to travel to the conurbation.

**2.12** Broadband connection is poor in the rural area which may inhibit homeworking, rural businesses and affects children who need to access the internet for homework.

**2.13** Strategic Issues

**2.14** There is a wide range in the size of the villages and a scattering of smaller settlements and individual houses throughout the rural area. Whilst the four larger villages have some facilities and act as local centres, other settlements have few facilities and are relatively remote with poor access to the larger villages or towns.

**2.15** The smaller villages and their surrounding rural areas record higher levels of deprivation than the larger villages with income, employment, education and skills being particularly problematic.

## 3 Planning Policy Context

**3.1** Natural Environment

**3.2** Much of the northern part of the rural district forms part of the Cranborne Chase and West Wiltshire Downs Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty. To the east of Cranborne the landscape is designated as an Area of Great Landscape Value. Wildlife interests in this part of the district are localised with chalk grassland and ancient woodland being important. In the southern and eastern part of the rural district lie areas of nature conservation importance. Holt Heath and Holt Forest Site of Special Scientific interest (SSSI) is a National Nature Reserve and Horton Common and Cranborne Common SSSIs are also protected by European legislation as Special Protection Areas and Special Areas of Conservation.

**3.3** Flooding

**3.4** The River Allen flows south from Wimborne St Giles to meet the River Stour south of Wimborne, this river flows east close to Sturminster Marshall and Shapwick where there is a wide flood plain. Both Sturminster Marshall and Shapwick have flood defences and the Stour valley, the Allen valley which includes Wimborne St Giles and its tributary which includes Gussage All Saints and Gussage St Michael, are shown to have associated flooding which falls within Zone 3b.

**3.5** Historic Built Environment

**3.6** The chalk downlands are particularly rich in archaeological remains. Whole areas, particularly in the north from the Crichels to Pentridge and in the south in the area around Badbury Rings are important archaeological landscapes with features from different periods. Away from the downlands there are important barrows as well as earthworks at Knowlton.

**3.7** Some of the villages are Conservation Areas, including Edmondsham, Hinton Martell and Pamphill.

**3.8** Green Belt

**3.9** The easterly villages of the rural area fall within the designation of the south East Dorset Green Belt. Of the larger villages only Sturminster Marshall lies within the Green Belt.

**3.10** Strategic Issues.

**3.11** The protection of the heathlands is of great concern but for the population of the rural area, dealing with the deprivation issues of low incomes, low skills and employment issues are important. Accessibility is an issue and restricts choice for many.

## 4 Existing Community Facilities

**4.1** Sport and recreation

**4.2** The larger villages of Alderholt, Cranborne, Sixpenny Handley and Sturminster Marshall have recreation grounds but these are not necessarily sufficient to serve the needs of the villages which have expanded since the grounds were created. Whilst a skate ramp and teenage shelter have been installed in the recreation ground at Sixpenny Handley, and recent improvements have been made to facilities in Alderholt it still does not have sufficient suitable facilities for children and young people. Cranborne has slight under provision of facilities for children and young people and whilst there are facilities in Sturminster Marshall they are not easily accessed from the northern part of the village.

**4.3** Smaller villages are less likely to have any facilities for sports although there may be a cricket pitch such as at Wimborne St Giles and Pamphill, and Holt has a well supported football club.

**4.4** The sports facilities at Queen Elizabeth Upper School at Pamphill serve a wide area.

**4.5** The rural area has a large number of public foot paths but a low number of bridleways.

**4.6** Health

**4.7** East Dorset falls within the area of Dorset Primary Care Trust. The main hospitals for the district lie outside of it, to the south are Poole and Bournemouth and to the north, Salisbury. The two hospitals within the district are the Victoria hospital in Wimborne and St Leonards Hospital. Both of these have out patient clinics and the Victoria Hospital also carries out day surgery.

**4.8** The smaller villages do not have doctor's surgeries but the larger villages such as Sixpenny Handley have a surgery even if on a part time basis, serviced by a practice in a larger settlement.

**4.9** Education

**4.10** East Dorset has a three tier system. Some of the rural first schools such as Sixpenny Handley and Gaunts Common are popular and have consistent numbers but others have low numbers and there must be concern for these schools if numbers decline further.

**4.11** From first school pupils move to middle schools which are located in the larger settlements. In the southern part of the district, pupils normally transfer to middle schools in Wimborne and in Corfe Mullen. Cranborne has a middle school which serves a wide rural area. Parental choice obviously pays a part in the numbers attending a school but some of the numbers of surplus spaces will be caused by demographics. Ferndown Middle and Upper Schools are less popular than Cranborne Middle School and Queen Elizabeth Upper School. In Alderholt, children may attend school in Fordingbridge rather

than Alderholt First School, Cranborne Middle School and Queen Elizabeth Upper School. This choice is influenced by the distance involved in attending the middle and upper schools. As a result of the changes in demographics and parental choice, some schools have had their admission numbers reduced. Some villages have nursery facilities such as Alderholt and Gaunt's Common

#### 4.12 General Community Facilities

4.13 Thirteen of the villages have a hall with the four larger villages having two. School halls may also be available for use out of school hours.

4.14 Some of the villages retain their public houses with villages such as Witchampton having a village club rather than a public house. The public houses serve a wider area than the village.

#### 4.15 Strategic Issues

4.16 The poor bus service may be problematic for those residents who in the past relied on local shops as these shops have closed in many villages. In their place, more specialist shops such as farm shops, the bakery at Long Crichel and shops in garden centres are opening up. These do not provide for everyday needs and may, in any case, be located out of the villages. For some residents, internet shopping may prove to be beneficial although broadband coverage in the rural area is generally poor.

4.17 Whilst there are a number of halls and recreation grounds they may not be sufficient for the current population. This may be more of a problem in the larger villages which have grown since the halls and recreation grounds were built.

4.18 Hospitals are a distance from the villages and access may prove a problem for some residents.

4.19 Some of the rural schools have low numbers of pupils and there is unlikely to be expansion in those villages. In any case, pupil numbers at a school are affected by parental choice. This choice affects the numbers at Cranborne Middle School and Queen Elizabeth Upper School, with correspondingly lower pupil numbers at Ferndown Middle and Upper Schools.

## 5 Accessibility Mapping

## 6 Community Strategy Issues

6.1 A number of villages have prepared parish plans and action plans. Alderholt, Holt, Sixpenny Handley and Pentridge and Sturminster Marshall have plans available. These frequently share the same concerns, for example the lack of facilities for children and young people and difficulties in accessing facilities in the larger villages or in the towns is a clear theme. Holt has concerns about the lack of a children's play area and facilities for young people but recognises that providing facilities in such a large and dispersed village is difficult.

6.2 Access to health facilities or the quality of them if these are provided in the village are another theme with Sixpenny Handley including the need for a new surgery in their action plan. Access in general is of concern in the villages but Holt recognises that buses are not well supported and suggests that the County Car Scheme or car sharing may be preferable.

6.3 Speed in villages is raised with requests to slow traffic in villages. This is tempered with recognition that those speeding may well be local residents. Speed is often a deterrent to people walking or cycling around the villages and Sixpenny Handley residents were concerned over pedestrian access to the school and Sturminster Marshall residents stated there was a need to improve cycle routes. Access to the countryside is another issue; footpaths and bridleways are not always well kept but provide good access to the countryside.

6.4 Housing is always a theme in the villages with high house prices giving rise to concern over housing for village young people and sometimes concern over housing for older people. Support for older people with a drop in facility was thought to be needed in Sturminster Marshall.

## 6.5 Strategic Issues

**6.6** Accessibility is poor for those without a car, often young people and older residents.

**6.7** Traffic speeds in village are considered to be too high and with narrow roads and a lack of pavements there are difficulties of walking and cycling around villages. This may impact on young people more than older people.

**6.8** House prices in the rural area are high and there is a need for affordable housing for young people and suitable housing for older people

## 7 Retail Provision

**7.1** The four larger villages provide local convenience shops which serve the village and the surrounding area. These vary in type between the settlements. The smaller villages have lost shops over recent years especially with the reduction in the numbers of post offices. These include Holt. Some of the shops within the smaller villages may be specialist shops such as the bakery at Long Crichel or shops associated with garden centres which do not provide for every day needs such as the shop at Stewarts Garden centre in Holt. Farm diversification may also be in the form of shops such as at Pamphill Dairy. A Community - run shop and cafe has recently opened in Witchampton which is proving successful and serves a wide hinterland. Residents in the rural area therefore use the larger centres within and outside the district for the majority of their shopping. The southerly villages will look to Wimborne, Ferndown, Poole and Bournemouth for their needs whilst those in the north-easterly villages such as Cranborne and Alderholt will use Fordingbridge and Ringwood. The residents of the villages such as Sixpenny Handley, Pentridge and Gussage St Michael in the north-west are more likely to use Shaftesbury and Salisbury. Shopping patterns will also be influenced by work place journeys and the increase in use of the internet for food and non food items will have helped some residents. Bus services for the rural area are infrequent though many operate on market days and are well used by older people.

## 8 Housing

**8.1** The housing numbers are reflected in the populations of the villages, discussed earlier. Hinton Parva is the smallest of the villages at 24 dwellings with Holt having 509. Next in size is Pamphill at 330, this like Holt is a scattered parish. Alderholt has 1,257 dwellings with Cranborne recording 317. (2001 Census)

### 8.2 Tenure

**8.3** The table below shows the breakdown of housing tenures by ward by percentage. (Source: Strategic Housing Market Assessment 2008)

	Owner Occupied (no mortgage)	Owner Occupied (with mortgage)	Social Rented	Private rented
Alderholt	42.8%	46.5%	8.6%	2.0%
Crane	31.1%	22.9%	15.1%	31.0%
Handley Vale	39.2%	16.0%	14.2%	30.7%
Holt	55.1%	35.2%	4.0%	5.7%
Stour	41.0%	26.8%	14.7%	17.5%
East Dorset	48.8%	35.9%	8.3%	7.0%

Table 1



**8.4** There is a significantly high proportion of private rented property in both Crane and Handley Vale wards which is likely to be accounted for by the number of properties owned by the larger estates.

**8.5** Density

**8.6** The table below shows the breakdown of dwelling type by ward.

	house	Semi detached house	Terraced house	Detached bungalow	Semi or terraced bungalow	Flat
Alderholt	35.7%	16.4%	8.1%	31.2%	4.1%	4.5%
Crane	38.3%	37.2%	5.4%	8.0%	8.3%	2.8%
Handley Vale	28.6%	30.9%	7.9%	20.2%	6.4%	6.1%
Holt	54.1%	21.7%	2.0%	18.4%	0.9%	2.8%
Stour	40.8%	25.1%	13.3%	11.4%	4.2%	5.2%
East Dorset	30.9%	11.5%	9.1%	33.5%	5.1%	9.9%

Table 2

**8.7** It is to be expected that house types in the rural area will vary from the East Dorset average. Alderholt, as the largest village, conforms more closely to the district average while Holt shows a marked difference with 54.1% detached houses against the district average 30.9%. There are a lower number of bungalows in Alderholt and this is repeated throughout the rural settlements.

**8.8** The table below shows the breakdown of household types.

	Single pensioners	2 or more pensioners	Single Non pensioners	2 or more adults - no children	Lone parent	2+ adults 1 child	2+ adults 2+ children
Alderholt	13.2%	20.0%	5.1%	31.9%	2.5%	9.7%	17.7%
Crane	15.9%	12.3%	3.1%	44.3%	2.7%	11.1%	10.6%
Handley Vale	15.3%	21.5%	13.6%	31.1%	1.8%	10.5%	6.3%
Holt	5.1%	18.1%	5.7%	51.2%	0.9%	9.3%	9.6%
Stour	14.7%	16.2%	10.0%	34.4%	0.9%	10.8%	13.1%
East Dorset	16.4%	20.7%	8.6%	34.8%	1.9%	7.7%	9.9%

Table 3

**8.9** The figures for the villages are lower than the East Dorset average of 16.4% for single pensioners. Holt records 5.1% with Crane the highest at 15.9%. Crane, in contrast, has a low figure for households of two or more pensioners, 12.3% with Handley Vale being the only one over the average (20.7%) at 21.5%.

**8.10** Both Handley Vale and Stour have a higher number of single, non pensioner households than the average, 16.6% and 10.0% in comparison to 8.6%. The remaining wards are below the district average.

**8.11** Holt has 51.2% of households with 2 or more adults but the other wards are close to the district average of 34.8%.

**8.12** Alderholt and Crane have higher than average figures for lone parents (2.5% and 2.7% compared to 1.9%). Holt and Stour have 0.9%.

**8.13** Households of 2 or more adults and one child are all above the district average but Handley Vale (6.3%) and Holt (9.6%) record lower figures than the district average (9.9%) for households of 2 or more adults and 2 or more children.

#### 8.14 Household size by ward

	One person	Two people	Three people	Four or more people
Alderholt	18.3%	37.3%	15.8%	28.6%
Crane	19.0%	38.8%	18.9%	23.3%
Handley Vale	28.9%	45.2%	12.1%	13.7%
Holt	10.8%	50.9%	14.2%	24.0%
Stour	24.6%	35.3%	12.2%	27.9%
East Dorset	25.0%	44.6%	13.0%	17.4%

Table 4

**8.15** Handley Vale has a higher percentage of one person households than the district, the rest of the wards are below. Both Handley Vale (45.2%) and Holt (50.9%) have more 2 person households than the district average (44.6%) and again the remainder are below the average.

**8.16** Crane has the highest number of three person households (18.9%) with Handley Vale (12.1%) and Stour (12.2%) the lowest. Other than Handley Vale (13.7%), all the wards record higher percentages than the district percentage (17.4%) with Alderholt at 28.6%.

#### 8.17 Overcrowding/Under-occupation

	Overcrowded	OK	Under-occupied
Alderholt	1.7%	56.5%	41.8%
Crane	1.0%	53.8%	45.2%
Handley Vale	1.7%	54.8%	43.5%
Holt	0.0%	42.0%	58.0%

Stour	2.9%	52.2%	44.8%
East Dorset	1.0%	51.6%	47.4%

Table 5

	In unsuitable housing	Not in unsuitable housing
Alderholt	3.1%	96.9%
Crane	3.7%	96.3%
Handley Vale	8.3%	91.7%
Holt	3.5%	96.5%
Stour	6.9%	93.1%
East Dorset	4.1%	95.9%

Table 6

**8.18** Housing can be unsuitable because of its size, type, location or cost.

**8.19** Two of the five rural wards record higher percentages of households in unsuitable housing than the district average. These are Handley Vale and Stour. These two wards, along with Crane, have high levels of both social rented housing and private rented housing. Households in such accommodation are more likely to record that they are in unsuitable housing than owner occupier households. If this is the reason, then Crane residents are in more suitable housing as the figure is below the district average. The reason for accommodation being unsuitable is unknown but Stour may record a lower number due to its location and the wider variety of facilities within Stuminster Marshall or within the urban area of south east Dorset which is more accessible.

**8.20** Housing Need

**8.21** Households Currently in Need

	In need	Not in need
Alderholt	1.7%	98.3%
Crane	2.8%	97.2%
Handley Vale	3.3%	96.7%
Holt	0.0%	100.0%
Stour	4.7%	95.3%
East Dorset	1.9%	98.1%

Table 7

**8.22** 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.

**8.23** Crane (2.8%), Handley Vale (3.3%) and Stour (4.7%) all record higher percentages of households in housing need than the district average (1.9%). This corresponds with the higher numbers who are in unsuitable housing in Handley Vale and Stour with Crane having a lower figure.

## 8.24 Households in Future Need (annual)

	In need	Not in need
Alderholt	0.5%	99.5%
Crane	1.5%	98.5%
Handley Vale	2.9%	97.1%
Holt	0.5%	99.5%
Stour	0.9%	99.1%
East Dorset	1.4%	98.6%

Table 8

**8.25** Future need is calculated by multiplying the number of new households which have formed by the proportion unable to buy or rent in the market. The number of existing households falling into need is also included in the figure.

**8.26** Handley Vale shows a markedly high percentage of households will be in future need with 2.9% against the district average of 1.4%. The remaining wards are close to or well below the district average.

## 8.27 Special Needs Households

	Special needs	Non-special needs
Alderholt	14.9%	85.1%
Crane	18.0%	82.0%
Handley Vale	22.5%	77.5%
Holt	14.4%	85.6%
Stour	20.8%	79.2%
East Dorset	18.6%	81.4%

Table 9

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

**8.29** Handley Vale and Stour are again the wards which have above average percentages of households with special needs, 22.5% and 20.8% against the district average of 18.6%.

## 8.30 Older Persons Households

	Older person only households	Other households
Alderholt	33.2%	66.8%
Crane	28.2%	71.8%
Handley Vale	36.8%	63.2%

Holt	23.3%	76.7%
Stour	30.9%	69.1%
East Dorset	37.1%	62.9%

Table 10

**8.31** Older people are defined as men over 65 and women over 60.

**8.32** The figures show that the rural wards have a lower percentage of older person only households than the district as a whole. Holt has 23.3% older person households although Handley Vale has 36.8% which is close to the East Dorset average of 37.1%.

**8.33** Key Workers

	Key worker households	Non-key worker households
Alderholt	12.9%	87.1%
Crane	8.2%	91.8%
Handley Vale	7.3%	92.7%
Holt	14.1%	85.9%
Stour	14.8%	85.2%
East Dorset	9.3%	90.7%

Table 11

**8.34** Key workers are defined in the research as being those employed in the following categories:

- Nurses and other NHS staff
- Prison/Probation staff
- Teacher
- Junior and retained fire fighter
- Police Officer
- Social Worker, educational physiologist, therapists

**8.35** Standards of accommodation 2001 census.

	Properties lacking basic facilities-without central heating, bath/shower or toilet or both
Alderholt	1.5%
Crane	16.8%
Handley Vale	15.6%
Holt	6.4%
Stour	10.1%
East Dorset	3.6%

Table 12

**8.36** As the rural area has many older properties as well as many which are privately rented, the high numbers of properties which lack basic amenities are only to be expected (Crane 16.8%, Handley Vale 15.6% against the district average of 3.6%). Alderholt at 1.5% may be explained as it has had more recent growth and both Alderholt and Holt have higher percentages of owner occupied dwellings.

**8.37** House Prices

**8.38** The table below sets out the most recent figures for house prices in the rural area:

**8.39** Average House Prices (Sales July -September 2009, England and Wales figure, April 2010, Land Registry)

	Detached	Semi-detached	Terraced	Flats/maisonettes	Overall average
Rural East Dorset	£402,954	£257,541	£185,477	£0	£345,928
East Dorset	£328,625	£211,131	£173,848	£172,801	£274,912
Dorset	£327,505	£214,667	£188,132	£158,711	£242,103
England and Wales	£256,879	£156,181	£125,679	£153,406	£164,455

Table 13

**8.40** House prices are high relative to income in East Dorset, and with many people of high income retiring or choosing to live in the district rather than the conurbation, this has raised property prices. It has led to a very high affordability gap for those on lower incomes living in the area. Based on the figures above, for a person with an average salary of £25,000, they will need to find 8x 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.

**8.41** The prices of detached and semi detached houses in the rural area are particularly high, reflecting the character of the area and of the properties themselves as well as the price people may be prepared to pay to live in what may be considered to be a "rural idyll".

**8.42** Housing requirements and implementation

**8.43** Crane and Handley Vale wards show high figures for houses lacking in basic amenities, it follows that modernisation of these properties is required. This could be a difficult task as these wards have high numbers of privately rented properties and these two issues may correlate. Again, these two wards record higher than average numbers of households with special needs, ie. households where improvements are required to accommodation and services to allow residents to remain in their own homes.

**8.44** Stour records the highest level of overcrowding and at the same time a high level of social housing. Handley Vale shows a higher than district average for households in future need of accommodation. Consideration will need to be given to resolving this issue, perhaps with a concentration within the ward of rural exception sites for affordable housing.

**8.45** Opportunities for additional residential development, other than possibly rural exception sites for affordable housing, are limited. The council has resolved to grant permission in some villages where there are existing settlement boundaries set out in the Local Plan. These dwellings are mostly in Alderholt which is the largest of the rural settlements with a smaller number in Sturminster Marshall.

**8.46** The East Dorset Local Plan has two sites remaining of the allocated sites in this area. The site at Gussage St Michael is now known to be affected by flooding as a result of the Strategic Flood Risk Assessment which has been carried out. There are two sites at Sixpenny Handley. One is within the built up area (land adjoining Back Lane) and the other at Frogmore Lane was shown to be accessed by the proposed by-pass for the village. The Transport Improvements Key Issues Paper shows that there is limited funding for new roads. Whilst the Local Plan policy requires the by-pass to be built before the development of the Back Lane site unless it could be shown that there would be no impact on the local highway network, it is possible that alternatives to the by-pass could be acceptable to allow this site to be developed. The development of the Frogmore Lane site would only occur if the by-pass was constructed as it also has significant drainage issues that would have been resolved as part of the by-pass construction. The Back Lane site extends to 0.8ha.

**8.47** Strategic Issues

**8.48** House tenures show a significantly high proportion of private rented property in both Crane and Handley Vale wards which is likely to be accounted for by the number of properties owned by the larger estates. House types show a marked difference to the district average. Bungalows are in low numbers which is to be expected. Alderholt, as a larger village which has expanded since 1981, has a similarity to the district average. Whilst there are a high number of detached properties in the rural wards they may not necessarily be large properties, many cottages are detached and will have a low number of bedrooms. Stour ward shows higher than average levels of overcrowding with Holt showing a higher percentage for under occupation which is perhaps not surprising given that it records a high number of two person households.

**8.49** Across the rural area, under-occupation is much higher than overcrowding.

**8.50** Three of the five wards have higher percentages of key workers than the Dorset average with Stour ward being exceptionally high. Given the range of house types throughout the rural area it is unsurprising that the rural wards record higher than average figures for key workers. It is also to be expected with the higher than district average figures for younger people of economically active age.

**8.51** Crane, Handley Vale and Stour wards all show households in need with Handley Vale having a high percentage of households in future need.

**8.52** As the rural area in general has many older properties as well as a high number of privately rented dwellings it is only to be expected that there are high numbers of properties which lack basic amenities.

**8.53** Both detached and semi detached houses have high prices. This perhaps reflects the character of the area and the properties and the price people are prepared to pay to live in what they may consider to be a rural "idyll".

## 9 Employment

**9.1** From 2001 Census, by Ward and parish

**9.2** The employment figures are compared by Ward to the district and county

**9.3** Percentage of population who are economically active

	Alderholt ward	East Dorset	Dorset
%of total population	49.4	45.5	45.7
% employed part time	21.0	20.8	20.9
% full time	57.9	55.6	55.3

% self employed	14.4	17.5	17.6
% unemployed	2.6	2.6	3.1
% full time students with jobs	4.2	3.6	3.1

Table 14

	Crane	East Dorset	Dorset
% of total population	52.3	45.5	45.7
% employed part time	20.3	20.8	20.9
% full time	49.0	55.6	55.3
% self employed	25.0	17.5	17.6
% unemployed	2.5	2.6	3.1
% full time students with jobs	3.2	3.6	3.1

Table 15

	Handley Vale	East Dorset	Dorset
% of total population	49.1	45.5	45.7
% employed part time	19.0	20.8	20.9
% full time	51.6	55.6	55.3
% self employed	23.8	17.5	17.6
% unemployed	3.3	2.6	3.1
% full time students with jobs	2.3	3.6	3.1

Table 16

	Holt	East Dorset	Dorset
% of total population	51.8	45.5	45.7
% employed part time	19.0	20.8	20.9
% full time	47.8	55.6	55.3
% self employed	28.8	17.5	17.6
% unemployed	2.0	2.6	3.1



% full time students with jobs	2.3	3.6	3.1
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Table 17

	Stour	East Dorset	Dorset
% of total population	48.7	45.5	45.7
% employed part time	19.6	20.8	20.9
% full time	53.1	55.6	55.3
% self employed	22.8	17.5	17.6
% unemployed	1.8	2.6	3.1
% full time students with jobs	2.7	3.6	3.1

Table 18

**9.4** Given that the population of the rural area is generally younger than that of the district, it is of no surprise to find the percentages for those employed in the rural area is correspondingly higher. There are high figures for those who are self employed with only Alderholt having a lower figure than the district average.

	% High Skill	% Intermediate Skill	% Low Skill
Alderholt	47.1	39.6	13.4
Crane	37.6	41.8	20.6
Handley Vale	39.4	42.6	18.0
Holt	49.2	26.8	14.1
Stour	42.3	41.2	16.5
East Dorset	43.4	41.4	15.2
Dorset	39.7	41.6	18.7

Table 19

**9.5** Tourism is important in the district with 6% of workers (2,443 jobs) were employed in the tourism sector and the total annual spend by visitors was £100,999,000. Farm diversification into tourism has occurred, with places such as Honeybrook Farm and the Heavy Horse Centre providing an attraction for local people and tourists. On a smaller scale, Barford Farm at Shapwick not only makes ice-cream but during the summer sells ice-cream from the farm. Some of the large houses are open to the public, Kingston Lacy which is owned by the National Trust being the most famous but Cranborne Manor opens its gardens and Edmondsham House and gardens are both open during the summer on a limited basis.

**9.6** Employment Sites

**9.7** Only one site in the rural area is large enough to be included in the Christchurch and East Dorset Employment Land Review Stage 1 Report. This is Baillie Gate at Sturminster Marshall, at 7.74ha. The development, based on the site of the former milk factory which was associated with the railway line, reuses some of the milk factory buildings and as a consequence some of the units are somewhat dated. There is a significant manufacturing base with construction, storage and distribution also found.

**9.8** Some new constructions have been completed recently and there is some potential for further development within the eastern area of the site.

**9.9** Whilst the site may provide local employment, those working there do not necessarily live locally and it is relatively remotely sited from larger settlements. Access is by means of a single entrance situated to the west and is via residential routes between the A31 trunk road and the employment area. The site may provide lower rents than industrial units in the south east Dorset conurbation.

**9.10** Smaller businesses are found across the rural area within the villages such as the small industrial units at Sixpenny Handley, as well as a growing number of workshops in converted farm buildings such as at Gaunts Business Centre. There are a number of garden centres such as Stewarts at Holt and Cranborne Manor Garden centre as well as some plant nurseries. Whilst there are a small number of people employed in agriculture, the large estates have estate offices such as the National Trust Estate Office at Pamphill. Both the National Trust and the Cranborne Estate run apprentice schemes to encourage local young people to learn craft skills.

**9.11** Other than Alderholt, the rural wards show a higher percentage than the average of self employed people. Whilst they may have premises in the urban area, equally they may work from home perhaps in the building trade but also may be higher skilled workers. Some may run businesses from home. Broadband is not widely available in the rural area which may inhibit the development of more self employment or of higher skilled jobs in the larger villages.

## 9.12 Strategic Issues

**9.13** There is only one large employment site in the rural area, Baillie Gate at Sturminster Marshall. Other employment is scattered throughout the villages and even the countryside where farms have diversified into other uses such as the Gaunts Business Centre. The area also shows a high number of self employed people but the types of businesses are not known. Tourism is important in the rural area with historic houses and farm diversification projects proving employment. Broadband is not widely available and this may inhibit employment opportunities.

## 10 Transport

**10.1** The A 354 is to the north east of the rural area, this links Blandford with Salisbury. To the south, the A 350 runs through Sturminster Marshall and provides a route from Poole to Blandford and on to the north of the county. This route is identified in the North and North East Dorset Transport Study as an important north-south route, particularly for freight traffic. The A350 provides a link to the M4. Running in parallel with the A350 within the district is the B3082. The B 3078 lies to the eastern part of the rural area and runs north-south. It links Cranborne in the north of the district with Wimborne in the south. C roads provide the links between the villages with some following river valleys or ridges on the downland. There are few roads in some parts of the rural area where conversion of old paths to roads for vehicles may have been restricted by the land owners, such as south of Long Crichel and south of Witchampton. Bridlepaths and footpaths are found in these areas.

### 10.2 Car ownership-percentage of households without a car 2001 Census

Alderholt	6.00
Chalbury	5.00
Cranborne	6.5

Edmondsham	3.6
Gussage All Saints	2.20
Gussage St Michael	0.00
Hinton Martell	4.70
Hinton Parva	5.10
Holt	9.70
Horton	5.10
Long Crichel	9.70
Moor Crichel	10.80
Pamphill	13.10
Pentridge	3.6
Shapwick	7.60
Sixpenny Handley	13.70
Sturminster Marshall	8.40
Wimborne St Giles	7.70
Witchampton	10.50
Woodlands	4.60
East Dorset	11.60
Dorset	16.96

Table 20

**10.3** Hinton Parva, the smallest of the villages recorded no households without access to a car in the 2001 Census with Sixpenny Handley having the highest percentage of households without access to a car. Sixpenny Handley is one of the larger villages with a range of local facilities. The accessibility data shows it to be one of the villages with the poorest access but the facilities to be found away from the village are the higher level facilities which may need frequent access such as hospitals and ones which have access provided such as middle and senior schools.

**10.4** Of the four villages where growth may be considered, Alderholt has a low percentage of households without access to a car, 6.00%, with Sturminster Marshall having 8.40%.

**10.5** Public Transport

**10.6** Public transport throughout the rural area is patchy. Sturminster Marshall has an hourly service between Blandford and Poole with less frequent services to Shaftesbury. There are three or more bus services a day along the A354 which pass through Sixpenny Handley. These two villages have the highest number of bus services. Alderholt has a daily service to Salisbury but there is only one bus in each direction a day. Other services are not daily. Cranborne and the smaller villages have an infrequent service but are also served by a flexible bus.

**10.7** Some of the rural area is served by “Car Schemes”. These are voluntary schemes which provide lifts for those who are elderly or mobility impaired, generally for medical appointments. Such schemes cover Alderholt, Cranborne, the Gussages and Sixpenny Handley and Holt.

**10.8** There is also a car share scheme for the whole of Dorset.

**10.9** Transport infrastructure

**10.10** There are no proposals for infrastructure improvements in the rural area. The by-pass at Sixpenny Handley which was included in the Local Plan no longer meets funding objectives and there is no support for the A350 as a regional route and therefore no funding for a bypass of Sturminster Marshall.

**10.11** Public Transport Improvements

**10.12** The North and North East Transport Study suggests community travel plans would help accessibility in the rural areas and that “Travel Exchanges” could be part of this in some villages. These would promote a centre for car sharing, access to bus services and a focus for car schemes amongst other suggestions.

**10.13** Strategic Issues

**10.14** Accessibility is an issue in the rural area and villages with a resulting high level of car ownership. Bus services are poor other than for Sturminster Marshall and to a certain extent, Sixpenny Handley. A flexible bus scheme serves the area but does not appear to be as popular as in other areas; this may be due to the length of the journeys which occur. More innovative ways of serving the rural area may be required. Funding is not forthcoming for the by-pass proposals for Sixpenny Handley and Sturminster Marshall.

## 11 Core Strategic Messages

**11.1** There is a wide range in the size of the villages and a scattering of smaller settlements and individual houses throughout the rural area. Whilst the four larger villages have some facilities and act as local centres, other settlements have few facilities and are relatively remote with poor access to the larger villages or towns.

**11.2** The smaller villages and their surrounding rural areas record higher levels of deprivation than the larger villages with income, employment, education and skills being particularly problematic.

**11.3** The protection of the heathlands is of great concern but for the population of the rural area, dealing with the deprivation issues of low incomes, low skills and employment issues are important. Accessibility is an issue and restricts choice for many.

**11.4** Accessibility is poor for those without a car, often young people and older residents.

**11.5** Traffic speeds in village are considered to be too high and with narrow roads and a lack of pavements there are difficulties of walking and cycling around villages. This may impact on young people more than older people.

**11.6** House prices in the rural area are high and there is a need for affordable housing for young people and suitable housing for older people.

**11.7** House tenures show a significantly high proportion of private rented property in both Crane and Handley Vale wards which is likely to be accounted for by the number of properties owned by the larger estates. House types show a marked difference to the district average. Bungalows are in low numbers which is to be expected. Alderholt, as a larger village which has expanded since 1981, has a similarity to the district average. Whilst there are a high number of detached properties in the rural wards they may not necessarily be large properties, many cottages are detached and will have a low number

of bedrooms. Stour ward shows higher than average levels of overcrowding with Holt showing a higher percentage for under occupation which is perhaps not surprising given that it records a high number of two person households.

**11.8** Across the rural area, under-occupation is much higher than overcrowding.

**11.9** Three of the five wards have higher percentages of key workers than the Dorset average with Stour ward being exceptionally high. Given the range of house types throughout the rural area it is unsurprising that the rural wards record higher than average figures for key workers. It is also to be expected with the higher than district average figures for younger people of economically active age.

**11.10** Crane, Handley Vale and Stour wards all show households in need with Handley Vale having a high percentage of households in future need.

**11.11** As the rural area in general has many older properties as well as a high number of privately rented dwellings it is only to be expected that there are high numbers of properties which lack basic amenities.

**11.12** Both detached and semi detached houses have high prices. This perhaps reflects the character of the area and the properties and the price people are prepared to pay to live in what they may consider to be a rural "idyll".

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**11.15** The rural area has higher numbers of younger people and those in the economically active age range. There are issues of accessibility especially for young and older people. This is particularly of note in the smaller villages which also record higher levels of deprivation. House prices are high and there is a lack of affordable housing. Overcrowding is an issue in Stour ward but usually properties are under occupied.