

# Core Strategy

## 06 Green Belt Key Issue Paper

Options for Consideration Consultation  
4th October – 24th December 2010



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

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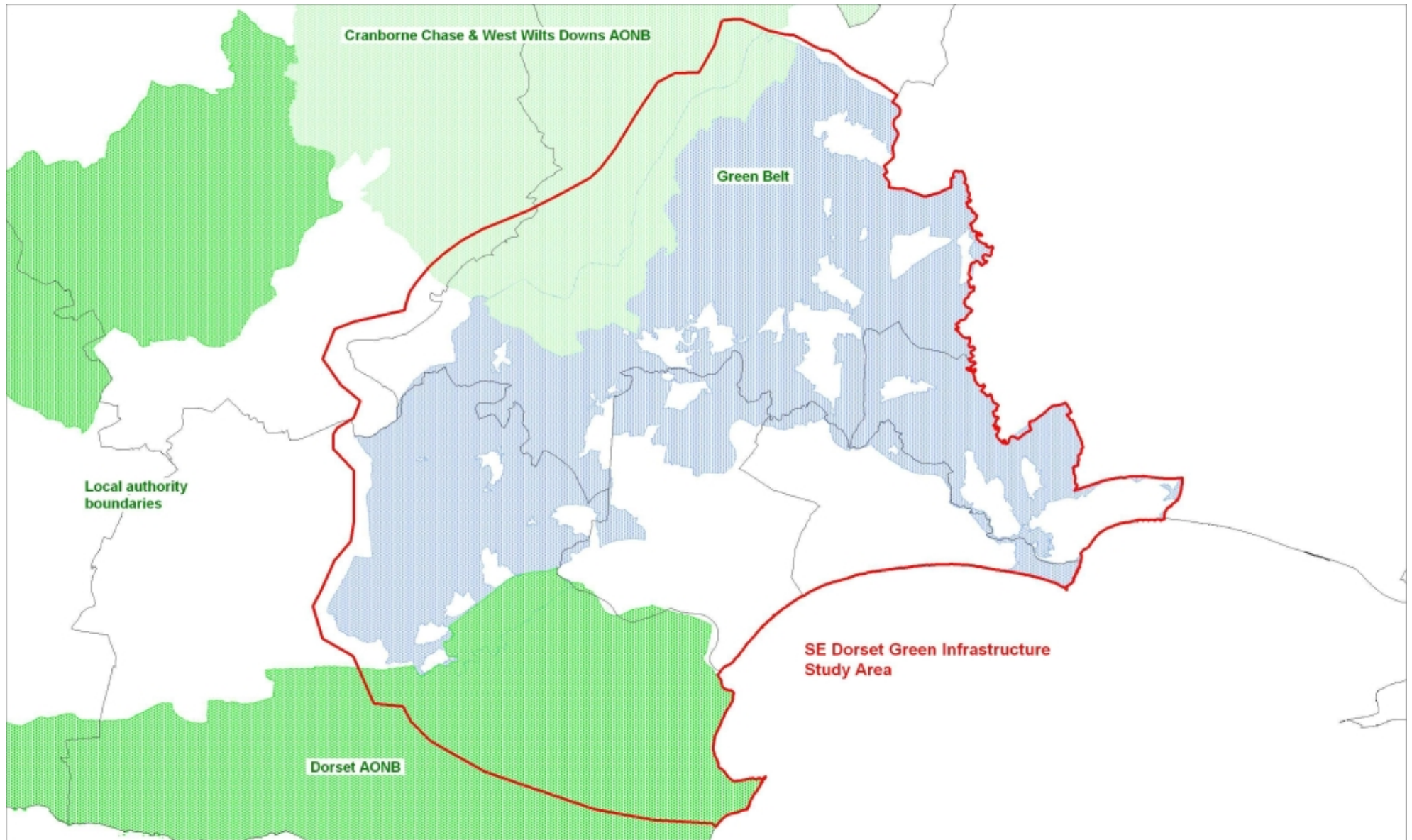
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## 1 Introduction

**1.1** This paper has been prepared as part of the Local Development Framework to inform the development of the key strategy for matters affecting the Green Belt. The preferred strategy will be set out in the Christchurch and East Dorset Core Strategy. This paper is one of a number of thematic background papers which address distinct issues affecting Christchurch and East Dorset. These issues have been identified from local policy, local development framework evidence base and the Community Plans of Christchurch and East Dorset. This document sets out the process of how the key strategy for Green Belt has been refined toward the development of a preferred strategy following Issues and Options work undertaken for the Core Strategy in spring 2008. This paper sets out the critical issues, problems and challenges to be considered in planning for the future protection of the South East Dorset Green Belt in Christchurch and East Dorset. The development of a preferred strategy to address these issues has been informed by the following:

- National and local policy
- Objectives of other relevant plans and programmes (National to local)
- Sustainability Appraisal
- Core Strategy Issues and Options Stakeholder Engagement
- Evidence studies undertaken by the Council and key stakeholders.

**1.2** The topic of 'development in the Green Belt' is important for each authority as they both have large areas within their boundaries covered by this designation (see picture 1 below). The presence of the Green Belt has influenced and shaped the settlement patterns of each authority and remains an important designation for both. The map below shows the extent of the Green Belt across South East Dorset and the location of Christchurch and East Dorset within it.



Picture 1 South East Dorset Green Belt

**1.3** The Green Belt is considered important by both residents and the Councils in maintaining their distinctive settlement patterns and the gaps between them. There was significant public opposition to the urban extension proposals in East Dorset in the now abandoned Draft Regional Spatial Strategy, which would necessitate the rolling back of the inner Green Belt boundaries to accommodate these areas.

## 2 Baseline

### 2.1 The History of the South East Dorset Green Belt

**2.2** The Green Belt in this area was established by the 1980 South East Dorset Structure Plan following recognition that the growth of settlements around the conurbation had resulted in the distinction between town and country becoming blurred and had spread the influence of urban development into the surrounding countryside. The 1980 Structure Plan set out that Green Belt was established for the following purposes:

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

**2.3** The Green Belt around South East Dorset runs from Wareham in the west to Walkford and Chewton Bunny in the east. It also extends to the north of Verwood. The Green Belt links to the one in South West Hampshire and abuts the New Forest National Park.

**2.4** All of the countryside in Christchurch Borough and almost half within East Dorset District is protected as Green Belt, with the boundary tightly drawn around Christchurch and the larger towns within East Dorset such as Wimborne, Ferndown and Verwood.

**2.5** The Green Belt covers just over 47% (16,840ha) of East Dorset District and is concentrated to the south of the District where it abuts the conurbation. In Christchurch Borough the whole of the rural area outside the main settlements is designated Green Belt 3,477ha (approximately 70%). The whole of the South East Dorset Green Belt covers 330 sq km.

**2.6** East Dorset District contains the largest area of Green Belt of any of the constituent local authorities within the South East Dorset Green Belt.

**2.7** The Green Belt areas of both Christchurch and East Dorset are mainly agricultural in character, with areas of sporadic residential development, small hamlets, significant areas of lowland heathland (which are protected for their wildlife importance under European legislation), areas of woodland/forestry, playing fields and sports grounds and, in East Dorset, two significant Country Parks which provide recreational facilities to residents of the Poole/Bournemouth conurbation and beyond as well as to residents of East Dorset.

### **Sustainability Appraisal Baseline Information**

**2.8** The Christchurch and East Dorset Sustainability Appraisal Draft Scoping Report (August 2008) sets out baseline information and identifies sustainability issues. Sustainability issues relevant to the Green Belt paper are set out below.

### **2.9 Environmental Baseline and Issues**

**2.10** The Scoping Report doesn't identify any specific sustainability issues relating to the Green Belt.

### 2.11 Countryside and Landscape

**2.12** Although the Green Belt is not designated for its landscape quality or visual amenity these attributes can be associated with the South East Dorset Green Belt. The Core Strategy has a role in protecting Green Belt boundaries, keeping the land open, nature conservation and providing an aspect of protection to much of the countryside areas.

### 2.13 Flood Risk

**2.14** Following the completion of the Strategic Flood Risk Assessment some parts of the Christchurch urban area are affected by high flood risk when factoring the effects of climate change to 2086 and 2126. Flood attenuation measures such as upstream flood storage would retain the openness of the Green Belt and are an appropriate use. Green Belt should therefore be considered for such engineering works to reduce flood risk downstream. Large-scale attenuation works are not appropriate for either district, although smaller-scale works are being considered at the airport.

### 2.15 **Social Baseline and Issues**

### 2.16 Culture, Leisure, Recreation, Housing and Health

**2.17** There is a recognised need for additional housing within the plan area to meet the needs of the existing and future population, and a significant need for affordable housing (this issue is addressed more comprehensively in the Affordable Housing Key Issue Paper where the need for a rural exceptions policy is considered). Both authorities also have a requirement to provide adequate gypsy and traveller pitches to accommodate local need. However, there are constraints within the existing urban areas which will possibly limit the delivery of housing and also of gypsy and traveller sites, which could put pressure on Green Belt Sites. The Dorset – wide Gypsy and Traveller Development Plan Document (DPD) will identify sites to meet the local need within the Plan area.

**2.18** The urban extension proposed in Christchurch and the new neighbourhoods proposed in East Dorset in the Green Belt contribute to meeting projected local housing requirements as do small scale local needs housing which meet the provisions of PPG2 and PPS3.

**2.19** People use land within the Green Belt in Christchurch and East Dorset for leisure and recreation. This is one of the uses of land appropriate within the Green Belt and can be important in ensuring that residents have extensive areas of open space in which to spend leisure time and enjoy for recreational purposes which can have positive health benefits for the local communities.

**2.20** As part of the development proposals in both Christchurch and East Dorset, there may be an element of commercial development and the employment extension area of search 'West of Ferndown' identifies 20ha for commercial development. These sites identified for urban extensions and new neighbourhoods are currently within the Green Belt, and the Core Strategy will define the location for development within these areas which will be removed from the Green Belt. The range of uses to be accommodated in the urban extensions and new neighbourhoods will be addressed in the Core Strategy/Christchurch urban extension Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) informed by master planning work.

### 2.21 Core Strategic Messages



- The Green Belt aims to protect the separate physical identity of individual settlements in the area by maintaining wedges and corridors of open land between them and to maintain an area of open land around the conurbation.
- Parts of the Green Belt also have visual amenity and landscape quality attributes.
- There is pressure on the Green Belt from development in particular residential. If the local housing requirements are to be met, proposed residential new neighbourhoods will need to be identified within the Green Belt.

## Policy Background

**2.22** Green Belts are not designated for their quality of landscape or nature conservation value; their main purpose is to maintain the openness (openness relates to the physical absence of inappropriate development and buildings in the Green Belt, it does not relate to the visual impact of development) of the land, by way of controlling the spread of urban development and to prevent the coalescence of settlements.

**2.23** Green Belts are covered by national and local policy which is set out below.

### 2.24 National

#### Planning Policy Guidance 2 (Green Belts) January 1995

##### Analysis

There are five purposes of including land in Green Belts:

- to check the unrestricted sprawl of large built-up areas;
- to prevent neighbouring towns from merging into one another;
- to assist in safeguarding the countryside from encroachment;
- to preserve the setting and special character of historic towns; and
- to assist in urban regeneration, by encouraging the recycling of derelict and other urban land.

The fundamental aim of Green Belt policy is to prevent urban sprawl by keeping land permanently open and the most important attribute of Green Belts is their openness. There is a presumption against inappropriate development in the Green Belt. Inappropriate development is, by definition, harmful to the Green Belt, and such development will only be permitted if there are very special circumstances to justify it. PPG2 explains that appropriate development in the Green Belt includes essential facilities which should be genuinely required for uses of land which preserve the openness of the Green Belt and do not conflict with the purposes of including land in it. Possible examples of such facilities include small changing rooms or unobtrusive spectator accommodation for outdoor sport, or small stables for outdoor sport and outdoor recreation.

PPG2 also states, at para 2.7 that *‘where existing local plans are being revised and updated, existing Green Belt boundaries should not be changed unless alterations to the Structure Plan have been approved, or other exceptional circumstances exist, which necessitate such revision.’* Local Plans have been replaced by Local Development Frameworks which affect the resultant Green Belt policy.

PPG2 states that when local planning authorities prepare new or revised Development Plans, any proposals affecting Green Belts should be related to a time scale which is longer than that normally adopted for other aspects of the plan. They should satisfy themselves that Green Belt boundaries will not need to be altered at the end of the plan period.

**Core Strategic Messages:**

The importance of the Green Belt has long been recognised as a key part of national planning policy.

Table 2.1

**Circular 11/2005: Town and Country Planning (Green Belt) Direction 2005**

Analysis

The Circular requires a local planning authority to consult the Secretary of State if it wishes to grant planning permission for a development above a certain size threshold, or which would have a significant impact on the openness of the Green Belt. This is to ensure a consistent approach to decision making in the Green Belt nationally, to ensure that inappropriate development is not permitted, and to reinforce the importance of maintaining its openness.

**Core Strategic Messages:**

Reinforces the importance attached to the Green Belt nationally, and the need to ensure inappropriate development which diminishes its openness is not permitted.

Table 2.2

**Circular 01/2006: Planning for Gypsy and Traveller Caravan Sites**

Analysis

This Circular re-states the guidance in PPG2 that residential development is normally inappropriate in the Green Belt, and that there is a presumption against inappropriate development in these areas. It advises that Local Planning Authorities should explore all alternatives before considering Gypsy and Traveller sites in the Green Belt, but where there is quantifiable evidence to support local needs pitches for Gypsies and Travellers with local connections, then a 'rural exceptions site policy' may be considered, as per the guidance set out in PPG3 and PPS3. It is recognised that Gypsies and

<p>Travellers in rural areas often face difficulties in finding sites and where there is a lack of affordable land to meet the local needs, policies should be included to address these issues. Under exceptional circumstances land may be removed from the Green Belt for identified Gypsy and Traveller Caravan sites (paragraphs 47 – 51), or they can be allowed in the Green Belt as an exception.</p>
<p><b>Core Strategic Messages:</b></p> <p>The Core Strategy must consider the needs of the Gypsy and Traveller community and consider whether there are very special circumstances to allow specific sites to be allocated for this use, or an exceptions sites policy be introduced.</p>

Table 2.3

<p><b>PPS 3: Housing (2010)</b></p>
<p>Analysis</p> <p>Paragraph 30 of PPS3 makes reference to ‘Rural exception site’ policy. This enables small sites to be used, specifically for affordable housing in small rural communities that would not normally be used for housing, because, for example, they are subject to policies of restraint. Such sites can only be used for local needs housing in perpetuity.</p>
<p><b>Core Strategic Messages:</b></p> <p>The Core Strategy must consider the needs of those requiring housing in rural areas and consider whether there are very special circumstances to justify an exceptions sites policy being introduced.</p>

Table 2.4

<p><b>Planning for a Sustainable Future: White Paper (2007)</b></p>
<p>Analysis</p> <p>The White Paper addresses the subject of the Green Belt in recommendation nine. It sets out that in the light of growing demand for land and the need to ensure that areas of high public value (such as sites with important or endangered wildlife) or areas at higher risk from flooding due to climate change are adequately protected.</p>

Decisions on Green Belt boundaries should be made through the development plan process. To ensure that future development takes place in the most appropriate and sustainable locations it is also important that planning authorities should, where appropriate, continue to review Green Belt boundaries when they are drawing up their development plans. The Government is committed to the principles of the retention of the Green Belt and will make no fundamental change to policy in this area.

**Core Strategic Messages:**

There will be no fundamental change to national Green Belt policy.

Table 2.5

**The Coalition: our programme for government (2010)**

Analysis

The coalition Government has stated that it will maintain the Green Belt, Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSIs) and other environmental protections, and create a new designation – similar to SSSIs – to protect green areas of particular importance to local people. This follows on from the Conservative Party’s statement in its pre-election Policy Green Paper No.14 (2010) to maintain national Green Belt protection.

**Core Strategic Messages:**

There will be no fundamental change to national Green Belt policy.

Table 2.6

**The Bournemouth, Dorset and Poole Structure Plan (2000)**

Analysis

When originally defined in the late 1970’s, the boundaries of the South East Dorset Green Belt allowed for a considerable amount of greenfield development. Much of this has been taken up, although a significant amount remains and is carried forward into this Structure Plan. As time goes on, the effect of the Green Belt will be to concentrate development within the existing built-up areas, again helping to reinforce a more sustainable pattern of development. The Structure Plan does not allow for safeguarded land within the Green Belt.

**Core Strategic Messages:**

The impact of the retention of the South East Dorset Green Belt in the current form was to reinforce a more sustainable pattern of development by a reduction in the development of Greenfield sites and focusing of development within urban areas with a consequent reduction in housing. It was not intended that the reduction in house building rates would be compensated by additions to existing settlements or the development of new settlements beyond the Green Belt. This situation is no longer tenable with the requirements to meet local housing needs and has resulted in the need to identify new areas for development within the Green Belt.

Table 2.7

**Christchurch Borough Local Plan (2001) Consolidated version October 2007****Analysis**

The Christchurch Borough Local Plan has one policy relating to the Green Belt, ENV18. This policy aims to protect the openness of the Green Belt by ensuring that the re-use of buildings within it does not adversely affect the Green Belt or the reasons for including land in it. The policy is set out below:

ENV18 – Proposals for the re-use of buildings and their curtilage in the green belt for employment, tourism and recreation will only be permitted provided that the following criteria are satisfied:

1. It does not have a materially greater impact than the present use on the openness of the green belt and the purpose of including land in it.
2. The building is suitable for the proposed use without major rebuilding and would not require significant alteration which would damage its fabric and character, or detract from the local characteristics and landscape quality of the area.
3. Any extensions to buildings and associated uses of land surrounding the building should not conflict with the purposes of including land in the green belt.
4. The form, bulk and general design are in keeping with their surroundings.
5. The use would not result in a loss of amenity or spoil the enjoyment of other users of the countryside by noise, traffic generation or other disturbance.

**Core Strategic Messages:**

The policies in the Christchurch Local Plan control development in the Green Belt and ensure that any development that occurs within it is appropriate and does not compromise the aims of the designation as stated in PPG2, unless there are very special circumstances. The Local Plan does not currently have a rural exceptions policy. This is being examined in the Developing Suitable and Sufficient Housing Key Issue Paper.

Table 2.8

### East Dorset District Local Plan (January 2002)

#### Analysis

The East Dorset District Local Plan has a few policies that relate to the Green Belt. These policies seek to ensure that extensions to, or the replacement of, dwellings in the Green Belt are not disproportionately large compared to the original structure, and that permitted development rights are not abused in respect of new agricultural buildings. The Plan also establishes that for the purposes of considering whether extended or replaced dwellings are disproportionate, the 'original dwelling' is that which existed on 5<sup>th</sup> February 1980 when the South East Dorset Green Belt was first adopted. The Plan also contains a policy HSUP3 which protects 6 identified areas from development pending the review of the Development Plan process, which are currently not within the Green Belt or the urban areas. The policies are set out below:

GB3 – Within the Green Belt, extensions to or replacements of existing dwellings will only be allowed where:

- a. The extension or the replacement dwelling does not materially change the impact of the dwelling on the openness of the Green Belt, especially through its height or bulk; and
- b. The size and scale of a proposed extension does not dominate the existing dwelling; and
- c. The size of any garage building must be commensurate with the replaced or extended property. Any space above the ground floor should be limited solely to storage use. Such space should not be capable of later conversion to residential use.

GB5 – To avoid abuse of permitted development rights, the re-use of agricultural buildings in the Green Belt will not be permitted where:

- a. They were constructed under permitted development rights; or
- b. Any agricultural use for which they were appropriate has been accommodated in a building constructed under permitted development rights; and
- c. In either case the new buildings were substantially completed less than four years previously without any clear agricultural justification for their original construction.

GB6 – To avoid abuse of permitted development rights, permission for the re-use of an agricultural building in the Green Belt may be subject to a planning condition or legal agreement withdrawing permitted development rights for further new agricultural buildings within the same group or in the vicinity of the re-used building where:

- a. The new buildings could be required to accommodate any uses capable of being housed by the building which it is proposed should be re-used; and
- b. Any new buildings could have a seriously detrimental effect on the openness of the green belt or be damaging to its visual amenity.

GB7 – Infill development will be allowed under policy GB2. Such development should be contained wholly within the Village Infill Envelopes, and should be of a scale and character that respects the existing village form.

HODEV6 – Outside the Green Belt and in the outer parts of the Green Belt away from the urban areas, planning permission exceptionally may be granted for affordable housing within or immediately adjoining the settlements identified below, on land which would not otherwise be released for housing development, provided that:

- a. The scheme would meet a specific, demonstrable local need which justifies the provision of additional housing at that time in that location and which would not otherwise be met; and
- b. There are secure arrangements to ensure that the benefits of affordable housing will be enjoyed by subsequent occupiers who are local to that area as well as by initial occupiers; and
- c. The scheme is small scale and of a character appropriate to the location.

Proposals on sites adjoining those urban areas which are excluded from the Green Belt do not fall within this policy. Suitable settlements where developments of this kind might be contemplated are: Alderholt, *Chalbury Common*, Cranborne, *Gaunt's Common*, Gussage All Saints, *Hinton Martell*, Holt, Horton, *Shapwick*, Sixpenny Handley, Wimborne St. Giles, Witchampton, *Woodlands*. (Green Belt settlements are shown in italics).

HSUP3 – Planning permission for development, other than for agriculture or forestry, will not be permitted on the following sites prior to the completion of a review of the Local Plan:

Forest View Drive, Ferndown

Woodland Walk, Ferndown

Coopers Lane, Verwood

Doe's Lane (South), Verwood

Blackfield Farm, West Moors

Julian's Road, Wimborne

#### **Core Strategic Messages:**

The policies in the East Dorset Local Plan look to control development in the Green Belt and ensure that any development that occurs within it is appropriate and does not compromise the aims of the designation as stated in PPG2, unless there are very special circumstances. The control of residential extensions/replacements related to the property as it stood in February 1980. Six sites have not been included in the Green Belt or the urban area pending a review of the Development Plan process.

Table 2.9

East Dorset's Corporate Plan (July 2010)
<p><b>Analysis</b></p> <p>The Council's Corporate Plan has as two of its Strategic Objectives the Environment – to manage and safeguard the natural and built environment for the benefit of current and future generations, and Housing – to improve the quality and availability of housing. It aims, for the environment, to ensure that appropriate development is supported across the District and that people with specific housing needs are able to live in appropriate accommodation.</p>
<p><b>Core Strategic Messages:</b></p> <p>The Core Strategy must look to balance protecting the natural and built environment whilst also ensuring that housing needs in the area are addressed.</p>

Table 2.10

<p><b>Community Strategies</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 'Shaping our Future' the Community Strategy for Dorset 2007–2016</li> <li>• East Dorset Sustainable Community Strategy – Building Communities Together 2008</li> <li>• The Christchurch Community Plan 2007–2010</li> </ul>
<p><b>Analysis</b></p> <p>The three applicable Community Strategies ('Shaping our Future' the Community Strategy for Dorset 2007–2016, East Dorset's Sustainable Community Strategy – Building Communities Together 2008 and Christchurch's Community Partnership Community Plan 2007–2010) all recognise that the area has a high quality natural and built environment which should be protected and enhanced, but also recognise that there is a shortage of affordable housing across the two areas which is a significant issue for the local communities that needs addressing. The County –wide Community Strategy recognises that there is a potential conflict between the desire to protect the environment and the need to provide affordable housing across the County.</p>
<p><b>Core Strategic Messages:</b></p> <p><b>The Core Strategy must look to balance protecting the natural and built environment whilst also ensuring that housing needs in the area are addressed.</b></p>

Table 2.11

**Core Strategic Messages**

- There will be no fundamental change to national Green Belt policy.



- The Core Strategy must look to balance protecting the natural and built environment whilst also ensuring that housing needs in the area are addressed.
- The Core Strategy should consider providing for affordable housing and gypsy and traveller needs as exceptions to Green Belt policy where very exceptional circumstances exist to justify this need.
- The Core Strategy should consider the identification of Major Developed Sites in the Green Belt in accordance with the provisions of Annex C of PPG2.
- The Core Strategy will only propose the alteration to the existing inner Green Belt boundary to accommodate residential development to meet recognised local needs in sustainable locations, some of the sites safeguarded under policy HUSP3 of the East Dorset Local Plan, and for the operational requirements of the airport.
- The Core Strategy will confirm that in the consideration of whether extensions/redevelopments of existing dwellings are appropriate, the 'original dwelling' is that which existed on 5<sup>th</sup> February 1980.

### 3 Identification of Issues

**3.1** This section will consider the validity of the questions posed in the Issues and Options consultation (GB1, GB2 and GB3) and how appropriate they were, based on responses and other issues identified by key stakeholders, members of the public and through the evidence base. In addition, this section will set out any issues that have been identified from new evidence arising since the Issues and Options engagement. This will then form a consolidated list of issues for the development of preferred options in Section 4. It should be noted that there is a crossover between this paper and the Affordable Housing Key Issue paper in respect of affordable housing, and to some degree the location of Gypsy and Traveller pitches within the Green Belt which will be addressed in the Developing Suitable and Sufficient Housing Key Issue paper.

**3.2** There were 2 issues raised at Issues and Options stage (and a third question to ensure all the issues under the theme had been identified), these issues are set out below. The identification of these issues was influenced by existing national legislation which sets the framework for GB1 to GB3. It is considered that these issues are still valid because there has been no change in national policy.

**3.3 GB1 – Are there particular types of development which should be considered for provision in the Green Belt as an exception to normal Green Belt policy because they are urgently needed?**

**3.4** The issues of exceptions for affordable housing in the rural areas and gypsy and travellers have been addressed in the Affordable Housing Paper and affordable housing policy will be developed through the Core Strategy.

**3.5 GB2 – Should land be released from the Green Belt and safeguarded for future development required beyond that needed in this plan?**

**3.6** During the Issues and Options consultation only one area was proposed as safeguarded land which is currently within an area being considered for residential development in north Corfe Mullen. The current Structure Plan implies that no Green Belt land should be safeguarded for future development, and the responses to Issues and Options highlighted that respondents were generally not in favour of land being ‘earmarked’ in this way. PPG2 allows for land to be safeguarded and states in Annex B that: ‘Safeguarded land comprises areas and sites which may be required to serve development needs in the longer term, i.e. well beyond the plan period. It should be genuinely capable of development when needed. Safeguarded land should be located where future development would be an efficient use of land, well integrated with existing development, and well related to public transport and other existing and planned infrastructure, so promoting sustainable development.’

**3.7** There is nothing emerging in the current evidence to justify safeguarding land for future development beyond the Plan period. It is acknowledged that there are significant local housing needs in the area, but due to the severe environmental constraints on the Plan area, with particular reference to the areas affected by the Habitats Regulations, this need cannot be fully accommodated. This situation will not change beyond the Plan period and therefore safeguarding land for the future will not overcome the environmental constraints to allow this land to come forward for development.

**3.8 GB3: Have we identified all of the issues under this theme?**

**3.9** Apart from the issues identified and consulted on in the Issues and Options document, only one significant issue was raised by respondents in the consultation exercise. This related to the suggestion that a number of sites be identified as ‘Major Developed Sites’, as defined in Annex C to PPG2. Annex C to PPG2 identifies that there are a number of Major Developed Sites such as factories, civil airfields, hospitals and military establishments within Green

Belts which often pre-date the planning system and Green Belt designation. The guidance set out in this Annex allows for such sites to be formally identified through the Development Plan process and that infilling or redevelopment within them, subject to certain criteria, is not inappropriate development within the Green Belt.

**3.10** Major Developed Sites are required to meet certain criteria and the sites put forward in response to this question will be considered in Section 4.

### **3.11** Other sites

**3.12** Consultants Barton Wilmore on behalf of Sutton Land Holdings have put forward a residential extension immediately south of the B3073 for 1000 dwellings. This proposal had not been put forward to the now abandoned Regional Spatial Strategy at the modifications stage. This proposed extension is in the Green Belt and not related to the existing urban area. It is understood that these representations are no longer being pursued, however the proposal has been assessed.

**3.13** Consultants Planning Solutions have proposed the construction of a hotel on land adjacent to the Airport (south of Parley Lane sports club) as part of the facilities to serve its expansion. However, this is not a use appropriate within the Green Belt and there is no justification to amend the Green Belt boundary to accommodate this use.

**3.14** Ken Parke Planning Consultants have submitted a site for residential development within the Green Belt in Christchurch. This site is not within an area of search and is not strategic.

### **3.15** Other issues

**3.16** The East Dorset Local Plan identifies 6 sites, in Policy HSUP3, that have currently been excluded from the Green Belt and the existing urban area, pending a review of the Development Plan process. These sites were originally proposed as greenfield housing sites in the Deposit Plan, but their allocations were subsequently deleted following the Local Plan Inquiry to reduce the oversupply of housing and to prevent the use of greenfield land. The majority of these sites are now adversely affected by the 400m Heathland exclusion zone and are therefore incapable of being developed for residential purposes. The East Dorset Local Plan also contains a policy (GB3) that seeks to limit the size of extensions to residential properties in the Green Belt, however, this policy largely reflects the guidance on extensions to dwellings set out in PPG2. The Local Plan also contains a date of the 'original dwelling' for the purposes of considering whether an extension or replacement dwelling is appropriate in the Green Belt or not.

### **3.17** Conclusion

**3.18** There will be no adjustments to the Green Belt boundaries to allow for development not specifically identified in the evidence to support local need within the Plan area or national policy set out in PPG2. A number of areas of land, including a significant proposal in the vicinity of Bournemouth Airport, were put forward for consideration either for housing or employment uses. These areas do not conform to the Key Strategy of the Core Strategy and would not provide sustainable forms of development. The land at St Leonards Hospital will remain the only Annex C site in the Green Belt. No other sites put forward meet the criteria, in particular in respect of the size of the sites, set out in Annex C to PPG2 and therefore do not need to be considered further in this respect. Consideration will be given to the inclusion of the majority of sites identified under Policy HSUP3 into the Green Belt, in particular those adversely affected by the Heathland exclusion zone. There will be no need to include a policy relating to the scale of appropriate extensions to dwellings

in the Green Belt as this matter is adequately covered in PPG2, however, the 'original dwelling' date will still need to be included to give clarity to the consideration to be given. The 5th February 1980 date is the date of the adoption of the first South East Dorset Structure Plan which identified the main extent of the Green Belt in this area.

**3.19** It should be noted that there are issues which are addressed in other papers which have a bearing on the Green Belt which are not discussed in detail here, namely:

- How can we meet housing need? - Scale and location of development within the Plan area (Addressed in Developing Suitable and Sufficient Housing Key Issue Paper)
- How should the Green Belt be amended to accommodate the operational requirements of the Airport? (Addressed in Bournemouth Airport Key Issue Paper.)

### **3.20 Evidence**

**3.21** The Green Belt within the plan area covers 100% of the land outside the main urban area of Christchurch Borough, and covers 47% of East Dorset and surrounds the main built up parts of the District.

**3.22** Pressure for development in the Green Belt is in part due to the need for dwellings to be provided within the Local Authority areas, as identified in the Dorset Survey of Housing Need and Demand (June 2008). Latest Land Registry data suggests that the average property price in Christchurch (at £257,637) is around 24% higher than the average for England and Wales and above the average for the whole of Dorset (around £250,000), and that the average property price in East Dorset (at £284,263) is around 37% higher than the average for England and Wales and well above the average for the whole of Dorset (around £250,000). Survey data suggests that around 996 households in Christchurch are currently living in unsuitable housing - the main reason being special needs and/or mobility problems, followed by accommodation being too expensive. In East Dorset the 2008 Housing Conditions Audit showed that 4.1% (1,600) dwellings were unfit for human habitation and 10% (3,800) of dwellings were seriously defective. These inadequate dwellings tend to be the older properties across the District.

**3.23** Generally Dorset has a lower proportion of the more affordable housing types which normally provide entry level property for first time buyers. This makes the demand for these properties higher, and it is more difficult for potential purchasers to buy their first property. Research by the Joseph Rowntree Foundation has identified Dorset as being one of the areas in the UK where housing is at its least affordable. Affordability is a function not just of house prices but also of local earnings. Whilst house prices have continued to rise, earnings have remained reasonably constant over recent years, resulting in a decline in the affordability of local houses to local people. Across the whole of Dorset the average house price was approximately 9 times the average annual wage in 2009. The most recent tables from DCLG show that in 2009 the house price to income ratio for Christchurch had fallen from 10.84 in 2007 to 9.04 in 2009, and in East Dorset the figure had fallen from 11.90 in 2007 to 10.71 in 2009. However this figure is however still very high especially when compared to the national average of 6.27 in 2009. The result of this is that an increasing number of people are finding themselves excluded from the housing market, and consequently the need for affordable housing, which has to include some element of subsidy, is becoming a pressing issue in Dorset.

**3.24** The need for additional transit and residential pitches for Gypsies and Travellers has been established in the Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Assessment for Dorset (2007). Consultants have been employed to produce a County wide Development Plan Document to identify Gypsy and Traveller sites, including in Christchurch Borough and in East Dorset.

**3.25** The demand for Gypsy and Traveller sites is often met outside existing urban areas due to the size of the plots required by this community and their inability to compete for residential land due to cost.

**3.26** Section 3 of PPG2 contains guidance on the Control over Development within the Green Belt, with paragraphs 3.4 and 3.6 giving specific guidance regarding the extension or replacement of dwellings in the Green Belt. This guidance is often referred to by Planning Inspectors in respect of Planning Appeal decisions for such developments.

### **3.27 Core Strategic Messages**

**3.28** The Councils' Options will follow the existing national and local policy regarding development in the Green Belt, which will result in no significant changes to the boundaries, except to accommodate development to meet recognised local needs.

### **3.29 Cross Border Issues**

**3.30** insert map which shows administrative boundaries with Green Belt.

**3.31** The Councils' evidence is that that the general extent of the current Green Belt will remain intact across the Plan Area, except where it will be amended to accommodate some new residential and employment development. Therefore the Green Belt policy across the conurbation will remain largely unchanged from that which exists at the moment, which is based on the guidance set out in PPG2 Green Belts.

**3.32** The adjacent Local Authority to the east, New Forest District, also contains an area of Green Belt which has a contiguous boundary with the South East Dorset Green Belt. This stretches along the Avon Valley south of Ringwood and around the coastal towns and villages from Lymington to New Milton, where it adjoins Christchurch Borough Council's boundary. New Forest District Council's recently adopted Core Strategy (October 2009) seeks to maintain the general extent of its existing Green Belt.

**3.33** Christchurch and East Dorset are not unique in facing development pressures on the Green Belt.

**3.34** Bournemouth Borough Council and Purbeck District Council have both raised objections to their proposed urban extensions which were proposed in the now – abandoned Draft Regional Spatial Strategy. Purbeck District Council have formally rejected the proposal in their emerging Core Strategy and Bournemouth Borough Council are not proposing their site for residential development in their Core Strategy Preferred Options Consultation (June 2010).

### **3.35 Summary of Critical issues**

**3.36** The following are the consolidated issues identified from the stakeholder engagement undertaken at Issues and Options and from the baseline information, evidence, consideration of other plans and strategies.

**3.37** It is concluded that the key issue for the Core Strategy is **whether there are there any particular types of development which should be considered for provision in the Green Belt as an exception to normal Green Belt policy because they are urgently needed?**

**3.38** The main issues that will need to be addressed are:

## 3 Identification of Issues

- 3.39** Issue 1 **Are there any particular types of development that can be justified under very special circumstances in the Green Belt?**
- 3.40** Issue 2 **Should any land be taken out of the Green Belt and safeguarded for future development?**
- 3.41** Issue 3 **Should we identify Major Developed Sites in the Green Belt?**
- 3.42** Issue 4 **Should the safeguarded sites identified in East Dorset Local Plan policy HSUP3 be placed within the Green Belt?**
- 3.43** Issue 5 **Do we need policy to control the extension of residential properties in the Green Belt?**

## 4 Formation of Options

**4.1** The formulation of Preferred Options set out within this section considers the outcomes of the Core Strategy Issues and Options engagement process, relevant evidence documents and the sustainability appraisal process undertaken at Issues and Options. This includes a critical assessment of the options put forward to address issues identified in the Issues and Options paper.

**4.2 Issue Identified at Issues and Options**

**4.3 GB1: Are there particular types of development which should be considered for provision in the Green Belt as an exception to normal Green Belt policy because they are urgently needed?**

**4.4 Issues and Options Consultation Response**

**4.5 Option A - No, there should be no exceptions to Green Belt policy?**

Agree	Disagree	No opinion	Total
60	43	6	109

Table 4.1

**4.6 Consideration of Evidence and Policy**

**4.7** No evidence was put forward in response to the Issues and Options consultation to justify development in the Green Belt as an exception to national policy, except for the consideration of a rural exceptions policy for affordable housing.

**4.8** The Dorset Survey of Housing Need and Demand (March 2008) and the Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Assessment for Dorset (2007), identify a need to consider affordable housing sites for local people outside the existing urban areas of East Dorset in particular, and for gypsies and travellers pitches which again are unlikely to be met within the existing or proposed urban areas and therefore need to be considered rural areas and within the Green Belt. These two particular uses can be proposed in accordance with existing Green Belt policy where very special circumstances can be justified to support their development within the Green Belt. This approach is set out in PPG2, PPS3 and Circular 1/2006.

**4.9** Planning Policy Guidance 2 (1995) makes it very clear that Green Belt boundaries should be carefully drawn in such a way as to endure for a period longer than the plan period to which they relate, and that they cannot be altered unless alterations to the development plan have been approved, or other very special circumstances occur.

**4.10 Issues and Options Sustainability Appraisal**

**4.11** This option has strong and significant beneficial impacts in relation to objective 2 (wise use of land). There is insufficient information on which to determine an assessment in relation to objectives 1 (protect habitats), 8 (water consumption) and 18 (protect heritage). This option has a negative impact on the provision of affordable housing.

### **4.12 Conclusions and Implications for Preferred Options**

**4.13** No evidence has been put forward to substantiate an exception to Green Belt policy, except in relation to affordable housing for people with a specific local need and Gypsy and Traveller caravan sites. These two latter uses are permitted as exceptions to Green Belt policy under certain very special circumstances.

### **4.14 Option B - Yes, to allow development of affordable housing where sites are not available in the built up areas?**

### **4.15 Issues and Options Consultation Response**

<b>Agree</b>	<b>Disagree</b>	<b>No Opinion</b>	<b>Total</b>
48	57	6	111

Table 4.2

**4.16** The majority of respondents agree that there should be no change to Green Belt policy although the responses also show that people are slightly more receptive to an exception in Green Belt policy if it is for the development of affordable housing. No specific comments were received in relation to this option.

### **4.17 Consideration of Evidence and Policy**

**4.18** The Dorset Survey of Housing Need and Demand (June 2008) reports for both East Dorset and Christchurch show that there is a significant need to provide more affordable housing in the area. This high level of demand has implications for the location of new housing, as the authorities have had difficulties providing sufficient affordable housing within the existing urban areas. The proposed urban extensions (land released from the green belt for residential development) are one opportunity to provide additional affordable housing units. The other mechanism is for land to be released from the Green Belt for limited local needs housing. This issue of the need for an affordable housing Green Belt exceptions policy is addressed in detail in the Affordable Housing Key Issue paper.

**4.19** PPG 2 Green Belts allows, in paragraph 3.4, for limited affordable housing for community needs in the Green Belt under development plan policies according with PPG(S) 3. Paragraph 30 of PPS 3 (Housing) provides guidance on a Rural Exception Site Policy for the identification of sites to meet a recognised local need for affordable housing in areas of policy constraint such as Green Belts, which then has to remain available for that purpose in perpetuity. However, the dwellings provided in this manner do not count towards the LPA's housing targets. The existing East Dorset Local Plan policy (HODEV6) allows for exceptions sites for local needs affordable housing, in line with the provisions of PPG2 and PPS3. The current Christchurch Local Plan does not contain an exceptions policy.



**4.20 Issues and Options Sustainability Appraisal**

**4.21** This option has strong and significant beneficial impacts in relation to objective 13 (affordable housing). It has uncertain or insufficient information on which to determine an assessment in relation to objectives 1 (protect habitats), 6 (air / noise pollution), 7 (need to travel), 8 (water consumption), 18 (protect heritage) and 22 (enhance landscape). Overall this option has a mainly neutral impact on the majority of the SA objectives.

**4.22 Conclusions and Implications for Preferred Options**

**4.23** The consultation response to this option was fairly mixed, however more people did not support the idea of changes in the Green Belt boundaries to accommodate affordable housing. The evidence highlights that there is a significant under supply of this type of housing and national policy does support limited affordable housing in the Green Belt to accommodate local need. In sustainability appraisal terms this option has beneficial impacts in supporting the affordable housing objective. The Affordable Housing Key Issue Paper will set out a policy relating to this option.

**4.24 Option C - Yes, to provide sites for gypsy and traveller accommodation where sites are not available in the built up areas?**

Agree	Disagree	No Opinion	Total
19	78	8	105

Table 4.3

**4.25 Issues and Options Consultation Response**

**4.26** Exceptions to Green Belt policy for Gypsy and Traveller accommodation were not favoured in the responses with only 19 people agreeing and 78 disagreeing. However, Christchurch and East Dorset have a legal duty to provide sites for gypsies and travellers and a solution of where they should be accommodated must be found. There is little scope for pitches to be provided in the built up area as there is little land available for development and that which is available tends to be developed for houses as much of the land is infill or small sites within the urban area that would not be suitable for pitches. Therefore much of the area where there is likely to be a need for Gypsy and Traveller sites may fall within the Green Belt boundaries or within the areas of search for additional residential development. No specific comments were received in respect of this option.

**4.27 Consideration of Evidence and Policy**

**4.28** The Assessment of Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation needs is a statutory requirement under section 225 of the Housing Act 2004. In 2007 a Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Assessment was undertaken for the County of Dorset. This study identified a substantial need for both permanent and transit sites across the County and recognised that there are significant environmental constraints across the area which will impact on site provision and that the Green Belt is one of these constraints. It should be noted that options relating to the location of Gypsy and Traveller sites will be considered as part of the Dorset wide Gypsy and Travellers Development Plan Document. The Core Strategy will set out a criteria based policy option which will be considered as part of the Providing Suitable and Sufficient Housing Key Issue Paper.

**4.29** Currently, there are insufficient sites formally identified for Gypsies and Travellers which often results in these groups locating in unsuitable areas with inadequate facilities. The Councils then have to spend much time and money moving them away from these unsuitable sites and from clean up operations. The identification of sites for Gypsies and Travellers through the plan process gives certainty to both the settled and travelling communities. This also gives the police the ability to move travellers from unauthorised encampments very quickly if an area has authorised sites. Once Gypsies have a permanent base from which to travel they can have access to health care and education that are largely denied to them now, which assists in integration with the settled community.

**4.30** Circular 01/06 (February 2006) aims to recognise, protect and facilitate the traditional travelling way of life of Gypsies and Travellers, whilst respecting the interests of the settled community. It is incumbent on local authorities to identify the required number of sites / pitches while taking on board the views and opinions of the local communities. There are government grants available to set up gypsy and traveller sites, which is the most economically efficient solution in the long term as money can be targeted away from enforcement and moving Gypsies and Travellers on from unsuitable, ill-equipped sites and onto purpose built suitable sites.

**4.31** The circular also states that alternatives should be explored before Green Belt locations are considered, however, as explained above there is little scope for the numbers required to be accommodated in the urban areas and therefore this leaves the option of sites having to be found within the Green Belt. The circular also explains that where land is removed from the Green Belt in this way, it should be specifically allocated in a Development Plan Document as a gypsy and traveller site only. Work is currently being undertaken on the production of a joint Development Plan Document across all of the Dorset Authorities on Gypsy and Traveller sites. This approach to site provision is supported by the Government Office for the South West.

### **4.32 Issues and Options Sustainability Appraisal**

**4.33** This option has potentially significant beneficial impacts in relation to objective 19 (enhance diversity). It has uncertain or insufficient information on which to determine an assessment in relation to objectives 1 (protect habitats), 3 (contamination / soil), 4 (minerals), 6 (air / noise pollution), 8 (water consumption), 18 (protect heritage) and 22 (enhance landscape). Overall this option has mainly neutral impacts in relation to the majority of the SA objectives.

### **4.34 Conclusions and Implications for Preferred Options**

**4.35** This option had a fairly negative response in the issues and options consultation and it was highlighted that people do not want to see gypsy and traveller sites in the Green Belt. However, as has been discussed above in the evidence and policy sections, Christchurch and East Dorset have a legal obligation to provide sites for gypsies and travellers and there are unlikely to be sufficient sites within the urban areas. In sustainability terms this option has beneficial impacts in relation to enhancing diversity. Options relating to the site location criteria of Gypsy and Traveller sites will be contained in the Housing Key Issue paper.

### **4.36 Main Conclusions for GB1**

- A policy to enable exceptions sites for the provision of Gypsy and Traveller sites will need to be established to meet statutory requirements, despite the clear opposition from the consultation process. This will be set out in the Providing Suitable and Sufficient Housing Key Issue Paper.
- The very high need for affordable housing in the districts justify the use of an exceptions policy approach to maximise new affordable housing for local communities. An exceptions site policy will be set out in the Affordable Housing Key Issue Paper.

#### 4.37 GB2: Should land be released from the Green Belt and safeguarded for future development required beyond that needed in this plan?

#### 4.38 Option A (yes, for housing development?)

Agree	Disagree	No Opinion	Total
26	87	10	123

Table 4.4

#### 4.39 Issues and Options Consultation Response

**4.40** The responses highlight that the South East Dorset Green Belt is important to many of the residents in both Christchurch and East Dorset and that they do not want to see land safeguarded for future development. This view is supported by the current Structure Plan.

**4.41** During the Issues and Options consultation only one area was proposed as safeguarded land which is currently within an area being considered for residential development in north Corfe Mullen. The current Structure Plan implies that no Green Belt land should be safeguarded for future development, and the responses to Issues and Options highlighted that respondents were generally not in favour of land being 'earmarked' in this way. PPG2 allows for land to be safeguarded and states in Annex B that: 'Safeguarded land comprises areas and sites which may be required to serve development needs in the longer term, i.e. well beyond the plan period. It should be genuinely capable of development when needed. Safeguarded land should be located where future development would be an efficient use of land, well integrated with existing development, and well related to public transport and other existing and planned infrastructure, so promoting sustainable development.'

**4.42** There is nothing emerging in the current evidence to justify safeguarding land for future development beyond the Plan period. It is acknowledged that there are significant local housing needs in the area, but due to the severe environmental constraints on the Plan area, with particular reference to the areas affected by the Habitats Regulations, this need cannot be fully accommodated. This situation will not change beyond the Plan period and therefore safeguarding land for the future will not overcome the environmental constraints to allow this land to come forward for development.

**4.43** There are six areas of land on the edge of urban areas within East Dorset which were identified for housing allocations in the East Dorset Deposit Local Plan. However, at the Local Plan Inquiry it became clear that there was an oversupply of housing land in the District against the Structure Plan target and a change in national policy to encourage the development of brownfield sites in advance of Greenfield sites. The housing allocations were deleted from the sites, but they were not placed in the Green Belt as it was the Council's intention that the housing potential of the sites would be re-examined in the next review of the Development Plan process in the context of the sequential approach to the identification of housing sites set out in PPG3 (Policy HSUP3). The majority of these sites (Forest View Drive, Ferndown, Coopers Lane, Verwood, Doe's Lane (South), Verwood, and Blackfield Farm, West

Moors) now lie within 400m of heathland protected under European legislation where normal residential development is not appropriate. The allocation of the sites outside the 400m heathland protection zone will be examined in more detail elsewhere in this Paper. Those areas within the 400m heathland protection zone could be considered for inclusion within the Green Belt.

**4.44** Consultants Barton Wilmore have put forward a residential extension immediately south of the B3073 for 1000 dwellings. This proposal had not been put forward to the now revoked Regional Spatial Strategy at the modifications stage and is not contained in requirements for amendments to the existing Green Belt boundary. This proposed extension is in the Green Belt and not related to the existing urban area. It is understood that the scheme is not being pursued by the agents.

### **4.45 Consideration of Evidence and Policy**

**4.46** Historically the Green Belt within East Dorset and Christchurch has never contained any safeguarded land. The areas of land the subject of Policy HSUP3 of the East Dorset Local Plan which are currently excluded from residential development due to their proximity to protected heathland could be allocated as Green Belt as they are generally open areas on the edge of existing settlements. For each site the Green Belt boundaries can be redefined to follow the existing urban area as shown in the East Dorset Local Plan. These boundaries meet the requirements of PPG2 in that they are readily recognisable and can endure for a long period. Alternatively, these areas could be considered for non-residential development, which would not be restricted by the heathland proximity. These are considered as follows:

- The northern half of the Coopers Lane site in Verwood, is designated as a Site of Nature Conservation Interest. It was originally intended that the site would have been developed for affordable housing and that this would have justified the direct impact on the nature interest. However, the proximity to the heathland means that this is now not acceptable. Coopers Lane is a strong feature which would make a good enduring Green Belt boundary. The southern half of the site is not constrained to have any nature conservation interest. It is characterised by a series of large housing plots. There is an isolated part of the urban area to the north east. The northern boundary of this area is defined by a strong hedge/tree belt and the eastern edge by Moorlands Road. It is uncertain what non-residential use could be developed on this area, but this is not considered a sufficient reason to place the site in the Green Belt. It is therefore proposed that only the northern part of this land should be re-designated as Green Belt, with the southern portion being designated as being within the urban area of Verwood.
- The land at Doe's Lane, Verwood is characterised by a series of large housing plots and small fields. It is open and rural in nature. Doe's Lane is an unmade track which currently forms a strong Green Belt boundary. Again it is uncertain as to what non-residential uses would be appropriate for the land, particularly as it is well treed and remote from facilities and services. The boundary of the existing urban area is an even stronger clear boundary to the Green Belt. The open character of the site, the remoteness from facilities and services, and the strength of the urban area as a boundary, means that this area is proposed for inclusion within the Green Belt.

- The land at Blackfield Farm in West Moors effectively comprises two large fields. The southern field is associated with the old railway line and runs into the urban area. The northern field is bordered by MoD land which is also heathland. The existing boundary of the Green Belt is well defined, but the land is open in character. The landowners have been preparing a scheme for a residential care home for the land, which would not conflict with the heathland policies. The fact that the land is well accessed, relatively close to facilities and services and has the opportunity to provide for an acceptable development in principle means that it should not be included in the Green Belt.
- Land at Forest View Drive, Ferndown is a designated Site of Nature Conservation Interest. It is open in character and currently largely scrub. The boundaries of the land are ill defined, whereas the edge of the existing urban area is clear. As the land is open in character with poorly defined boundaries and also of nature conservation interest it is proposed that it should be included in the Green Belt.

**4.47** Two sites lie outside the 400m heathland exclusion zone and could be considered for inclusion within the urban area. Both of the sites, at Julian's Road in Wimborne, and off Woodland Walk, Ferndown, are well related to existing facilities, are easily accessible and have the potential to accommodate additional residential development.

**4.48** The site at Julian's Road, Wimborne, is a small area of land bounded on three sides by the existing urban area. It is a small, rectangular, recently cleared area of open land between Julian's Road to the south and Cuthbury Close to the north. It is within level walking distance of the town centre and could be considered as part of the western new neighbourhood in Wimborne. It has an existing, well defined boundary with the Green Belt to the west which could form the urban area boundary in this location.

**4.49** The land at Woodland Walk is a substantial area of land on the northern edge of Ferndown adjacent to the A31. It is partially wooded, and is enclosed by the existing urban area on three sides. Access to the site has been safeguarded from an existing access to a substantial supermarket to the east, and a limited access could also be achieved from Woodland Walk. The existing residential development in the vicinity of the area is a mix of large dwellings set in substantial, well landscaped plots, and high density flat development. This site has the potential to accommodate a similar mix of development. The urban area boundary should follow the existing northern boundary of this site adjacent to the existing Green Belt.

**4.50** Currently, there are insufficient sites formally identified for Gypsies and Travellers which often results in these groups locating in unsuitable areas with inadequate facilities. The Councils then have to spend much time and money moving them away from these unsuitable sites and from clean up operations. The identification of sites for Gypsies and Travellers through the plan process gives certainty to both the settled and travelling communities. This also gives the police the ability to move travellers from unauthorised encampments very quickly if an area has authorised sites. Once Gypsies have a permanent base from which to travel they can have access to health care and education that are largely denied to them now, which assists in integration with the settled community.

**4.51** Planning Policy Guidance 2 (1995) Paragraph 2.12 makes provision for the concept of safeguarded land, but makes it clear that the guidance as to whether it is appropriate or not should be initially established in regional guidance. The Draft Regional Spatial Strategy, which has been revoked by the Secretary of State, did not identify the need to safeguard land for future development. The Government, in guidance from the Department of Communities and Local Government in July 2010, has stated that: *- Local planning authorities should continue to apply policies in PPG2. As part of their preparation or revision of DPDs, planning authorities should consider the desirability of new Green Belt or adjustment of an existing Green Belt boundary, working with other local planning authorities as appropriate.*

**4.52** It is considered that due to the environmental constraints across the Plan Area, it would not be appropriate to safeguard land from the Green Belt for future possible development.

### **4.53 Issues and Options Sustainability Appraisal**

**4.54** This option has a potentially significant beneficial impact in the long term in relation to objective 13 (affordable housing) and has potentially significant adverse impact in the long term in relation to objectives 2 (wise use of land) and 22 (enhance landscape). It has uncertain or insufficient information on which to determine an assessment in relation to objectives 1 (protect habitats), 3 (contamination / soil), 4 (minerals), 6 (air / noise pollution), 7 (need to travel), 8 (water consumption), 9 (water pollution) and 10 (flooding). Overall this option has mainly neutral impacts in relation to the majority of the SA objectives.

### **4.55 Conclusions and Implications for Preferred Options**

**4.56** As the consultation responses do not support the use of safeguarding land for development and there are environmental issues associated with the release of additional land for development, it will not be taken forward as part of the Core Strategy. Evidence from the Authorities' Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessments indicates that sufficient land is available within the existing urban areas and the proposed alterations to the Green Belt boundaries to accommodate the housing requirements to meet an identifiable local need. In sustainability appraisal terms it has potential adverse impacts on the wise use of land and enhancing the landscape, and there are also a number of uncertain impacts in relation to a number of other objectives it however has beneficial impacts in relation to affordable housing in the long term. Due to these reasons the only land that will be removed from the Green Belt will be that identified for the urban extensions and for the operational part of the airport, no additional land will be safeguarded. Land in East Dorset currently the subject of Policy HSUP3, which is constrained by heathland policy will be considered for inclusion in the Green Belt. Land which is not constrained by heathland will be considered for other uses within the Housing Paper.

### **4.57 Option B (yes, for employment development?)**

<b>Agree</b>	<b>Disagree</b>	<b>No opinion</b>	<b>Total</b>
20	84	11	115

Table 4.5

### **4.58 Issues and Options Consultation Response**

**4.59** Responses indicate that people do not want to see changes to Green Belt boundaries. There were a number of suggested alterations proposed to the Green Belt boundaries for either residential or employment purposes in response to this option. However the majority of the areas put forward lie outside the areas being considered by the Councils for additional development in sustainable locations adjacent to existing urban areas. The environmental constraints on the area indicate that no Green Belt land should be safeguarded for future development, and the responses to the issues and options highlighted that respondents were generally opposed to land being 'earmarked' in this way. Therefore none of the areas suggested will be taken forward as part of the Core Strategy.

#### 4.60 Consideration of Evidence and Policy

**4.61** The Bournemouth Dorset Poole Workspace Strategy and Delivery Plan (October 2008) identifies an employment land requirement for S E Dorset which does not require the safeguarding of land in the Green Belt. Land has been identified for employment uses to meet the needs set out in the Workspace Strategy to the west of the existing major employment site in East Dorset, at Ferndown Industrial Estate. However, there are flood risk and transport infrastructure issues to be overcome for further development to come forward at the Airport Business Park. This issue is addressed in the Airport and Sustainable Economic Growth papers.

**4.62** Planning Policy Guidance 2 (1995) Paragraph 2.12 makes provision for the concept of safeguarded land, but makes it clear that the guidance as to whether it is appropriate or not should be initially established in regional guidance. The Draft Regional Spatial Strategy which has been revoked by the Secretary of State, did not identify the need to safeguard land for future development. The Government, in guidance from the Department of Communities and Local Government in July 2010, has stated that: *- Local planning authorities should continue to apply policies in PPG2. As part of their preparation or revision of DPDs, planning authorities should consider the desirability of new Green Belt or adjustment of an existing Green Belt boundary, working with other local planning authorities as appropriate.*

**4.63** It is considered that due to the environmental constraints across the Plan Area, it would not be appropriate to safeguard land from the Green Belt for future possible development.

#### 4.64 Issues and Options Sustainability Appraisal

**4.65** This option has a potentially significant beneficial impact in the long term in relation to objective 24 (sustainable economy). It has potentially significant adverse impact in the long term in relation to objectives 2 (wise use of land) and 22 (enhance landscape). It also has uncertain or insufficient information on which to determine an assessment in relation to objectives 1 (protect habitats), 3 (contamination / soil), 4 (minerals), 6 (air / noise pollution), 7 (need to travel), 8 (water consumption), 9 (water pollution) and 10 (flooding).

#### 4.66 Conclusions and Implications for Preferred Options

**4.67** As the consultation responses do not support the use of safeguarding land for development and there are environmental issues associated with the release of additional land for development, it will not be taken forward as part of the Core Strategy. Evidence from the Workspace Strategy indicates that the land identified within the Plan area is sufficient to meet the needs of the area without the need to identify additional land to be safeguarded for the future. In sustainability appraisal terms it has potential adverse impacts on the wise use of land and enhancing the landscape, and there are also a number of uncertain impacts in relation to a number of other objectives. Due to these reasons the only land that will be removed from the Green Belt will be that identified for the urban extensions and for the operational needs of the airport, no additional land will be safeguarded.

#### 4.68 Main Conclusions for GB2

- It is concluded that there is no requirement to identify safeguarded land for future development.

- Consideration will be given to including land in the Green Belt which is currently the subject of Policy HSUP3 of the East Dorset Local Plan.
- Green Belt boundaries for the new neighbourhoods and the operational part of the airport in Christchurch and East Dorset will be considered within the Urban Extension and Airport key issue papers.

### **4.69 GB3: Should we identify Major Developed Sites in the Green Belt?**

#### **4.70 Issues and Options Consultation Response**

**4.71** Apart from the issues identified and consulted on in the issues and options document, only one significant issue was raised by respondents in the consultation exercise. This related to the suggestion that a number of sites be identified as 'Major Developed Sites', as defined in Annex C to PPG2. The sites proposed were Stewarts Garden Centre and the Sheiling School in East Dorset, and Parley Sports Club in Christchurch.

#### **4.72 Consideration of Evidence and Policy**

**4.73** Annex C to PPG2 identifies that there are a number of Major Developed Sites such as factories, civil airfields, hospitals and military establishments within Green Belts which often pre-date the planning system and Green Belt designation. The guidance set out in this Annex allows for such sites to be formally identified through the Development Plan process and that infilling or redevelopment within them, subject to certain criteria, is not inappropriate development within the Green Belt.

#### **4.74 Conclusions and Implications for Preferred Options**

**4.75** In response it is considered that none of the sites put forward meet the criteria set out in Annex C due to the fact that they are relatively small scale sites, and those in East Dorset (Stewarts Garden Centre and the Sheiling School) were considered, unsuccessfully, as part of the previous East Dorset Local Plan and there has been no material change in circumstances since then to justify their identification as Major Developed Sites. In Christchurch the only site put forward was at the Parley Sports Club. This site does not meet the criteria set out in Annex C as its current use is appropriate within the Green Belt, being outdoor sport and outdoor recreation, and only has a small range of buildings associated with it.

**4.76** The St Leonards Hospital site is currently identified as the only Annex C site within the East Dorset Local Plan and has a valid, unimplemented, planning consent for residential re-development. This site continues to meet the criteria in PPG2 as a Major Developed Site and should therefore be considered as such in the Core Strategy. There are currently no Annex C sites identified within the Christchurch Local Plan and no sites have come forward which meet the criteria in PPG2.

#### **4.77 Main Conclusions for GB3**

- It is concluded that, other than St Leonards Hospital, there are no sites within the Plan Area which warrant the status of Major Developed Sites in accordance with the requirements of Annex C to PPG2.

#### **4.78 Other Issues not addressed in the Issues and Options Consultation.**



#### **4.79 Do we need policy to control the extension of residential properties in the Green Belt?**

#### **4.80 Consideration of Evidence and Policy**

**4.81** The East Dorset Local Plan contains a policy, GB3, which relates to the criteria to be used when judging planning applications for the extensions to, or the replacement of, dwellings in the Green Belt. The supporting text which accompanies it also explains that for the purposes of this policy, the 'original dwelling' is that which existed on the site on 5<sup>th</sup> February 1980, which is the date of the adoption of the first South East Dorset Structure Plan which designated the general extent of the Green Belt in this area.

#### **4.82 Conclusions and Implications for Preferred Options**

**4.83** It is considered that policy GB3 effectively repeats national policy, as set out in Section 3 of PPG2, and does not need to be considered within the Core Strategy. However, for clarification of the effective date of Green Belt policy within the Plan Area it is suggested that the Core Strategy does make reference to the 5<sup>th</sup> February 1980 date.

#### **4.84 The Main Conclusions that come out of this paper are set out below:**

- There is no requirement to identify safeguarded land for future development
- Consideration will be given to including land in the Green Belt which is currently the subject of Policy HSUP3 of the East Dorset Local Plan.
- A policy to enable exceptions sites for the provision of Gypsy and Traveller sites will need to be established to meet statutory requirements, despite the clear opposition from the consultation process. This will be set out in the Delivering Suitable and Sufficient Housing Key Issue Paper.
- The very high need for affordable housing in the rural areas of the districts justify the use of a rural exceptions policy approach to maximise new affordable housing for local communities. Rural exceptions site options will be set out in the Affordable Housing Key Issue Paper.
- Green Belt boundaries for the new neighbourhoods in East Dorset, urban extension in Christchurch, the operational part of the Airport in Christchurch and an employment site in East Dorset are considered within the Christchurch Urban Extension, East Dorset Employment options, and Bournemouth Airport papers.
- Other than St Leonard's Hospital, there are no sites within the Plan Area which warrant the status of Major Developed Sites in accordance with the requirements of Annex C to PPG2.
- For the purposes of determining proposals for extensions/redevelopment of existing dwellings in the Green Belt, the 'original dwelling' is defined as that which existed on 5<sup>th</sup> Feb 1980.

#### **4.85** The Core Strategy will set out Options relating to the following Green Belt issues:

- Options relating to the changes in the Green Belt will be dealt with in the Christchurch Urban Extension and Bournemouth Airport Key Issue Papers and the Key Strategy Paper.
- Options relating to Affordable Housing and Gypsies and Traveller sites will be dealt with in the Affordable Housing and Delivering Suitable and Sufficient Housing Key Issue Papers.
- An Option of identifying St Leonard's Hospital as a Major Developed Site in the Green Belt.

- An Option of placing the following sites within the Green Belt:

- - The northern half of Coopers Lane, Verwood
  - Doe's Lane, Verwood
  - Forest View Drive, Ferndown

### 4.86 OPTIONS

#### 4.87 Should we identify Major Developed Sites in the Green Belt?

**4.88 Preferred Option KS 3** Land at St Leonard's Hospital should be considered as a Major Developed Site in the Green Belt, in accordance with the requirements of Annex C to PPG2.

#### 4.89 Should the safeguarded sites identified in East Dorset Local Plan policy HSUP3 be placed within the Green Belt?

**4.90 Preferred Option KS 4** The inner Green Belt boundary will be re-drawn, as set out on the Map below, to incorporate the following sites within the Green Belt:

- - The northern half of land at Coopers Lane, Verwood
  - Doe's Lane, Verwood
  - Forest View Drive, Ferndown

**4.91** The following sites will be shown as being within the urban area:

- The southern half of land at Coopers Lane, Verwood
- Blackfield Farm, West Moors
- Julian's Road, Wimborne
- Woodland Walk, Ferndown

#### 4.92 Alternative Options

**4.93 Non Preferred Option KS 5** The inner Green Belt boundary will not be amended and the following sites will be included within the urban area.

- - Coopers Lane, Verwood
  - Doe's Lane, Verwood
  - Forest View Drive, Ferndown

- Blackfield Farm, West Moors
- Julian's Road, Wimborne
- Woodland Walk, Ferndown

**4.94 Non Preferred Option KS 6** The inner Green Belt boundary will be amended to include the following sites.

- - Coopers Lane, Verwood
  - Doe's Lane, Verwood
  - Forest View Drive, Ferndown
  - Blackfield Farm, West Moors
  - Julian's Road, Wimborne
  - Woodland Walk, Ferndown

### 5 Implementation

- 5.1** This section sets out a detailed implementation plan with reference to the key stakeholders involved in the delivery / implementation of the strategy and time scales involved.
- 5.2** In summary details concerning the implementation of the first two options are set out in the key issue papers referred to above.
- 5.3** There are no infrastructure requirements for the implementation of the Green Belt strategy. Resource implications have been considered and factored into the delivery timetable.