

## 12 Managing the Natural Environment

**12.1** The area is renowned for its special and often rare natural environment with large areas of both Christchurch Borough and East Dorset District being protected through European and national law, conventions and planning policy. It is important to protect this natural asset for its own sake. The impact of climate change also affects all areas of planning and presents one of the biggest challenges for the Christchurch and East Dorset Local Development Framework. Dwindling global reserves of natural resources mean that policies need to be introduced to ensure the most efficient use of non-renewable resources and introduce strategies to make new development more sustainable and efficient. Communities are also faced with an ever greater threat of flooding and coastal erosion as a result of increased rainfall and sea level rise. Conversely, predicted dry summers will have impacts on low flows in some rivers, with impacts on habitats and water abstraction.

**12.2** This section of the Core Strategy establishes an approach for addressing issues associated with protecting the natural environment which include:

- Protecting sensitive habitats and species from the pressures of development.
- Ensuring that sustainable construction and energy efficiency policies apply to new development.
- Renewable, decentralised and low carbon energy policies to apply to new development.
- Direct development away from flood risk areas while also making the best use of limited development land.
- Consider how development in areas at risk from coastal erosion would take place.
- Ensuring developments deliver climate change mitigation and adaptation measures.

**12.3** Options set out in this section have been established following responses received to the Issues and Options consultation, which was carried out in 2008, and informed by the evidence base. For further detail concerning the development of options please refer to the following documents:

- Key Issue Paper: Managing and Safeguarding the Natural Environment
- Key Issue Paper: Climate Change and Sustainable Development

### Managing and Enhancing the Natural Environment

#### Rules, Regulations and Advice

##### 12.4 International

- International Directives offer high levels of protection for the environment, including both habitats and species (Ramsar Convention, Bonn Convention, Bern Convention and EC Habitats Directive).
- Avoid any new development close to heathland sites and for new housing to provide areas other than heathland to avoid unwanted pressures on them (EC Habitats Directive and Bern Convention).

##### 12.5 National

- Planning policies should contribute to achieving sustainable development (Planning and Compensation Act 2004, PPS1)
- Seek to protect and enhance the quality, character and amenity value of the countryside and urban areas as a whole, with the highest protection going to the sites with national and international designations (PPS1, PPS9 and Circular 06/2005).

##### 12.6 Local

- Seek the restoration of Dorset's biodiversity to meet government targets for condition of Sites of Special Scientific Interest, farmland birds, priority species and birds.

- Support the protection of the most fragile environments and encourage greater access to more robust areas.
- Christchurch Community Plan:- Any development should protect and enhance the high-quality natural and built environment.
- No residential development within 400m of protected heathlands, and all additional residential development within 5km of the heaths can only be approved with suitable mitigation (Dorset Heathlands Interim Planning Framework).
- Create additional areas of specific types of habitat (Dorset Structure Plan and Dorset Biodiversity Partnership).
- Reduce the impact of noise on the New Forest National Park from the Airport and the A31(T) (New Forest National Park Management Plan Revised Draft).
- Ensure any development in the Cranborne Chase and West Wilts Downs Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty conserves and enhances the characteristic habitats and species at a landscape scale. (Cranborne Chase and West Wilts Downs Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty Draft Management Plan).
- Care will be taken to ensure that the impact of new development is minimised on the River Avon Special Area of Conservation, and that abstraction levels don't affect the Dorset Heathlands Special Area of Conservation. (The Catchment Abstraction Management Strategies for the Hampshire Avon and the Dorset Stour).
- Guide development based on sound environmental principles. (East Dorset's Nature Conservation Planning Guidance document).

**Where are we now?**

<b>Key Facts</b>	
<b>Biodiversity</b>	
•	In Christchurch 18.6% and in East Dorset 9.7% of the land is protected by some form of nature conservation designation.
•	Ancient woodland is found in both Christchurch and East Dorset.

		<b>Christchurch</b>	<b>East Dorset</b>
<b>International</b>	Total area of Internationally Designated sites (SAC, SPA & Ramsar)	774.22 Ha	1,717.38 Ha
	Total area of Internationally Designated Heathland sites (SAC, SPA & Ramsar)	397 Ha	1,674 Ha
<b>National</b>	Number and area of SSSI sites	10 (1,142.56 Ha)	22 (2,445.48 Ha)
	SSSIs in favourable condition (%)	33.25%	14.76%
<b>Local</b>	Number and area of SNCI sites	23 (129.04 Ha)	193 (1,805.85 Ha)
	SNCIs in favourable condition (good/fair) (%)	19.15%	37.56%
	SNCIs in poor condition (%)	2.81%	5.38%
	Number and area of LNR sites	4 (72.43 Ha)	10 (82.12 Ha)

**Countryside and landscape**

- The land use within the Plan area is primarily rural but with only about 20% of the population residing in the rural area.

- 45% of East Dorset lies within the Cranborne Chase and West Wiltshire Downs Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty.
- There is a statutory duty under the Environment Act 1995 to have regard to the purposes of National Parks when considering development proposals, even where this development is outside the park boundaries. This would apply to development adjacent to the New Forest.

### Historic environment

- The integrity of Conservation Areas, especially within Wimborne and Christchurch, and other protected sites and buildings will be affected by increases in flood risk as a result of climate change.

### The Natural Environment and Development

**12.7** The area is renowned for the quality of its natural environment and it is acknowledged that many sites and species are robustly protected by international and national legislation. These natural assets are a valuable resource in the area and help to sustain our tourism industry as well as attracting residents and businesses to the locality. Growth of these sectors, in particular housing, will need to avoid harmful impacts on the environment. If impacts are unavoidable, then mitigation will need to be provided to neutralise the harm, but if the harm cannot be mitigated, then development cannot take place. The mitigation of harm from residential development to the protected Dorset Heaths will normally be by way of the creation of significant areas of additional public open spaces, which will be advantageous to the whole population of the area.

### What you said at Issues and Options

- Residential development in the vicinity of protected heathlands should be mitigated by developer-funded alternative green spaces and other measures to reduce the pressure of additional people near heathland.
- The protection of heathland should not be at the expense of other habitats.
- Consideration should be given to the creation of a new Country Park within or adjacent to the Plan Area, such as along the Stour Valley, to provide additional non-heathland recreational space.
- Amenity open space and nature conservation and biodiversity are all considered to be water-compatible and could therefore be delivered in the flood plains.
- All biodiversity interests should be protected and enhanced, including water features.
- Concern was expressed that there are already too many controls in place in respect of heathlands and, whilst acknowledging that they should be protected, they should also remain available for local people to use.
- To withstand the pressures of climate change, habitats outside those already designated for their nature conservation importance should be considered as part of an integrated land management approach to the development of the Plan area.
- Care needs to be given regarding the impacts of development within the Plan area on the adjacent New Forest National Park.
- Consideration should be given to landscape-scale biodiversity opportunities.

### The Options

**12.8** The following options have been developed taking into account consultation responses, evidence, legislation and guidance.

**12.9 Issue: How can we continue to protect sensitive habitats and species from the pressures of development?**

**12.10** *(Note: the following options are not mutually exclusive and could all form a set of policy measures.)*

## Preferred Option ME 1

### Criteria-based development assessment for Biodiversity and Geodiversity

The Core Strategy policy will be based upon the principle of avoiding adverse affects to designated sites of biodiversity or geological importance within and adjoining Christchurch and East Dorset that may occur as a result of development. Policy will aim to protect, maintain and enhance the condition of nature conservation sites through the development process. In doing this, the policy should reflect the commitment to the Dorset Biodiversity Principles, with those specifically relevant to the Core Strategy:

- Reflect targets identified for local areas for species and habitat protection.
- Help raise awareness of the need for biodiversity conservation in the local context.
- Look for opportunities for conservation and enhancement of the whole biodiversity resource.
- Provide a basis for monitoring progress in biodiversity conservation.

Applicants will need to demonstrate that any proposed development will not result in adverse impacts on any internationally, nationally or locally designated site. To determine the likelihood of harm occurring, the following criteria should be addressed when development is proposed:

- Assess if any existing habitats, species and/or features of nature conservation importance are likely to be affected by the development, and to carry out a survey to document the results. The method of survey and level of detail will vary according to size and type of development, whether any protected species or habitats exist on site and may involve consultation with Natural England.
- Informed by the initial survey information, avoid existing sensitive habitats and species through careful site selection, development design and phasing of construction work.
- Site layout and design should retain existing habitats and features of interest and provide buffer zones around sensitive areas
- Provide new benefits to biodiversity by enhancing existing habitats or creating new ones, with consideration of the priority habitats referred to in the Dorset Biodiversity Strategy and the Strategic Nature Areas identified on the South West Nature Map.
- Where harm is likely to result, developments will be expected to provide measures to adequately avoid or mitigate that harm. If adequate mitigation cannot be provided, development may be refused.
- Provision must be made for the appropriate management of the retained and new features. Species and habitats should also be monitored for a suitable time period after the development to indicate any increases or declines in species numbers or habitat quality. Any declines would require corrective measures to halt or reverse the trend.

### Why is it Preferred?

It ensures that development will not have an adverse impact on sites of national and international importance for nature conservation.

### Does it conform to the rules, regulations and advice?

National	Yes	Local	Yes
Is it informed by evidence?			Yes
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A literature review of urban effects on lowland heaths and their wildlife – English Nature Research Reports No 623 (2005)</li> <li>• Evidence to support Appropriate Assessment of development plans and projects in south-east Dorset – Footprint Ecology (2006)</li> </ul>			

## Preferred Option ME 2

### Internationally and nationally designated sites

With regard to heathland Special Protection Areas, the emerging Dorset Heathlands Joint Development Plan Document will specify the types of development affected by option ME1 and will identify a mix of appropriate mitigation and avoidance measures, their nature, scale, location and design. In accordance with the advice from Natural England, no residential development is permitted within 400m of protected heathland and any residential development within 400m and 5km of these areas will provide mitigation as set out below. Where adequate mitigation measures cannot be provided on-site as part of the development, a financial contribution to the Councils will be required. The Dorset Heathlands Joint Development Plan Document will provide the type of development circumstances and a list of projects which will be funded by developer contributions and the calculated contribution amounts as they apply to different types of development. Projects delivered through the Interim Planning Framework/Development Plan Document will include Suitable Alternative Natural Greenspace (SANGs), heathland access and management, wardening, education, habitat re-creation and other appropriate measures. Due to their significance to the successful delivery of development, the Core Strategy will identify key SANGs of strategic importance such as those required to mitigate the pressures resulting from development at the options for new neighbourhoods. This includes:

- North of the Railway Line for the Christchurch urban extension
- Cuthbury allotments and south of Ferndown / West Parley, which may also include the proposed Stour Valley Country Park which would also serve the wider south east Dorset area.
- North of Wimborne
- North and west of Corfe Mullen
- South of Leigh Road, Wimborne
- South of Verwood
- North east of Verwood

Detailed specifications for the SANGs will be provided through the Joint Heathlands Development Plan Document.

In addition, and in recognition of the function of the New Forest National Park, the Core Strategy will carefully consider any adverse impacts on the New Forest as a result of development. Specific options to achieve this are proposed through Chapter 6 *Christchurch Urban Extension* and Chapter 7 *Bournemouth Airport and Business Park*.

**Why is it Preferred?**

This option will ensure that the effects of any development on the protected sites are suitably mitigated.

**Does it conform to the rules, regulations and advice?**

National

**Yes**

Local

**Yes**

**Is it informed by evidence?**

**Yes**

Access Patterns in South-East Dorset. The Dorset Household Survey 2008: consequences for future housing and green space provision, Footprint Ecology 2008.

Access Patterns in South-East Dorset: Dorset Household Survey and Predictions of Visitor Use of Potential Greenspace sites, Footprint Ecology 2008.

**Preferred Option ME 3**

**Locally Designated Sites**

All sites protected by policies within the Christchurch and East Dorset Local Plans will continue to be identified under the Core Strategy and their present designation, which includes Sites of Nature Conservation Interest, Regionally Important Geological and Geomorphological Sites, Local Nature Reserves, will remain the same. Option ME2 will apply to all these sites.

**Why is it Preferred?**

This Option will protect locally designated sites from inappropriate development.

**Does it conform to the rules, regulations and advice?**

National

**Yes**

Local

**Yes**

**Is it informed by evidence?**

**Yes**

Dorset Biodiversity Strategy 2003

**Preferred Option ME 4**

**Protection for undesignated sites**

Key undesignated sites of biodiversity or geological value which are shown to be under significant threat from pressures generated by new development, will be identified and designated locally in partnership with local biodiversity stakeholders. These sites may include priority habitats identified in the Dorset Biodiversity Strategy, green corridors and ancient woodlands that are not already designated. Once designated, options ME1 and ME3 will apply.

**Why is it Preferred?**

Leads to an enhancement of biodiversity.

**Does it conform to the rules, regulations and advice?**

National

Yes

Local

Yes

**Is it informed by evidence?**

Yes

Dorset Biodiversity Strategy (2003)

**Preferred Option ME 5****Climate Change adaptation**

Through options ME1 to ME4 the Core Strategy will promote improvements to the condition of sites of biodiversity importance through new development, thereby increasing their resilience to climate change. Reconnecting fragmented habitats and establishing wildlife corridors will be included as objectives within a strategy to develop a network of interconnected Green Infrastructure (See Preferred Option HE14). Design principles delivered through the Green Infrastructure strategy and options proposed through the Creating High Quality and Distinctive Environments Chapter will promote 'permeability' to allow wildlife to move through new developments and 'green corridors' (such as those currently identified in the Christchurch Local Plan). Management plans should be produced for sites which are likely to be significantly affected by climate change such as those within areas threatened by sea level rise or more frequent flooding.

**Why is it Preferred?**

Gives protection to environmentally sensitive sites which may be adversely affected by Climate Change.

**Does it conform to the rules, regulations and advice?**

National

Yes

Local

Yes

**Is it informed by evidence?**

Yes

The Catchment Abstraction Management Strategy for the Hampshire Avon and River Stour – Environment Agency (2004 and 2006).

South West Biodiversity Implementation Plan (Biodiversity: a Natural Advantage for the South West) (2004)

## Preferred Option ME 6

### Landscape scale biodiversity

In order to further protect, manage and enhance Christchurch and East Dorset's biodiversity and to create habitats more resilient to change, with particular reference to climate change, the Strategic Nature Areas set out on the South West Nature Map will be identified on the key diagram. They are shown as areas with potential for landscape-scale habitat enhancement and re-creation, and those referred to in preferred option ME2. Strategic Nature Areas are identified as the best areas to maintain and expand priority habitats.

Biodiversity improvement associated with new developments is one of the delivery mechanisms for the enhancement and re-creation of the Strategic Nature Areas. Conservation organisations, those involved with agriculture or forestry, as well as more general national funding sources are the others, which may lead to future partnership working to aid delivery. To ensure effective progress is being made, monitoring will need to be undertaken on a large scale by organisations such as local wildlife trusts or records centres, as those who have the best knowledge of the wider areas.

### Why is it Preferred?

Looks to provide connections between landscape and biodiversity as a way of building the resilience of sites with biodiversity importance against threats such as climate change.

### Does it conform to the rules, regulations and advice?

National

Yes

Local

Yes

### Is it supported by evidence?

Yes

- Dorset Biodiversity Strategy (2003).

## Climate Change and Sustainable Development

### Rules, Regulations and Advice

#### 12.11 International

- Make the most prudent use of natural resources, protect the environment and be aware of the impacts of climate change (World Summit on Sustainable Development).

#### 12.12 National

- Planning policies should contribute to achieving sustainable development (Planning and Compensation Act 2004, PPS1)
- Promote and encourage resource and energy efficiency, the use of renewable resources and low carbon technologies. (PPS1)
- A proportion of the energy to be used by new development should come from decentralised and low carbon sources (supplement to PPS1)
- Avoid inappropriate development in areas of flood risk (PPS25)

#### 12.13 Local

- Reduce fuel poverty by improving the energy efficiency of existing buildings, including historic buildings (Dorset, Bournemouth and Poole Energy Efficiency Strategy )

- Dorset Community Strategy:- New housing should be sustainable so that it does not exacerbate the global challenge of climate change.
- Develop a climate change adaptation strategy for Dorset.
- Increase the capacity and take up of renewable energy technologies.
- Reduce the amount of waste produced and improve the amount reused, recycled and recovered.
- East Dorset Sustainable Community Strategy:- New development should meet energy efficient and sustainable building standards, and should reduce carbon emissions.
- Careful consideration will be given to the most appropriate way of managing coastal erosion whilst protecting protected and sensitive habitats. (Poole and Christchurch Bays Shoreline Management Plan Review, The Christchurch Harbour and Waterways Management Plan).

### Where are we now?

#### Water

- The rivers Stour, Avon, Moors, Allen and Bure pass through the area and are liable to flooding.
- Wide areas within the Borough of Christchurch are subject to marine or fluvial flood risk.
- A large part of East Dorset District is designated as Groundwater Protection Zones.
- The amount of water used by households in the area has increased over the last decade, as has the abstraction of water from the local rivers.
- All rivers in Christchurch and 93% in East Dorset are rated as either good or very good for water quality.

#### Energy and Carbon

- In 2006, East Dorset consumed 24.1 GWh/1000 (giga-watt hours per 1000 people) of energy from a variety of non-renewable fuels, whilst Christchurch consumed 21.5 GWh/1000, compared to a Dorset average of 22.5GWh/1000.
- For commercial use both East Dorset and Christchurch use less kWh per consumer than the average in the South West or Great Britain.
- Some parts of the community experience fuel poverty.
- Residents in Christchurch emitted an average of 6.4 tonnes of CO<sub>2</sub> per capita while in East Dorset the figure was 6.8 tonnes; average figures were 6.8 tonnes for Dorset, 8.3 tonnes for the South West and 8.8 tonnes nationally.

### Impacts of Climate Change on the future Direction of the Plan Area

**12.14** Although the precise nature of environmental changes is not fully understood, changes in rainfall patterns (and river flow) and rising sea levels have significant implications for many of the existing settlements within the Plan area, as well as for the location of future development.

**12.15** Christchurch is the worst affected area as it is liable to the impacts of flooding from the two rivers, the Stour and Avon, as well as from coastal flooding. This situation has implications on the locations for future development and restricts opportunities for new housing and employment uses within these areas. There are more limited parts of East Dorset affected by flooding from the rivers which pass through the area, but again this feature has an impact on the future location of new development.

**12.16** Changes to river levels, as well as increases in abstraction rates to service additional development, can have an adverse impact on the integrity of sites of nature conservation importance and therefore any development that could affect river flows needs to minimise these impacts.

#### Sustainable Development

**12.17** There is a need to provide alternative, affordable renewable sources of energy, as well as improve energy conservation methods to manage our energy demands better.

**12.18** All new development, whether it is for housing or employment, will need to meet higher levels of sustainable construction and renewable energy sources. These schemes will also have to take account of the need to reduce water consumption and to maintain and improve water quality.

### What you said at Issues and Options

- General support for the adoption of higher (beyond Building Regulations) energy efficiency and sustainable construction standards.
- Concerns were expressed by the development industry of the costs of introducing standards that were higher than required nationally, and that schemes may be unviable.
- There is a need to require compliance with Code Level 3 for water efficiency in Christchurch and East Dorset.
- There is support for the incorporation of on-site renewable energy generation technologies into new development.
- However, it is argued that there is insufficient evidence to demonstrate a higher than nationally accepted target and that policies should not prescribe the technologies to be used.
- It was generally accepted that a proportion of no more than 10% renewable energy generation to maintain development viability and to ensure house prices do not significantly increase as a result.
- New development should be directed away from areas of flood risk and coastal erosion.

### The Options

**12.19 Issue: How should our sustainable construction and energy efficiency policies apply to new development?**

**12.20** *(Note: the following options are not mutually exclusive and could all form a set of policy measures.)*

## Preferred Option ME 7

### **Sustainable development standards for new homes and extension or refurbishment of existing homes.**

Other than water efficiency, the Core Strategy will not require new housing to meet higher standards of the Code for Sustainable Homes beyond the programme required nationally (as set out in the national policy statement 'Building a Greener Future'). Developments will, however, be required to incorporate carbon reduction, water and energy efficiency measures and to demonstrate they have explored a range of sustainable and low carbon options. The Councils will encourage and favourably consider innovatively designed schemes which achieve high levels of carbon reduction, where they meet with other planning requirements. This approach will also apply to development involving the extension or refurbishment of existing homes (where planning permission is required). Decisions regarding the most appropriate range and type of measures to be considered for each development should be informed by the Code for Sustainable Homes design categories, but are most likely to include:

- Water and energy efficiency.
- Orientation and solar gain (natural lighting and heating).
- Use of renewable and low impact materials.
- Minimising waste, pollution and water run-off.

The Core Strategy will adopt targets 2a and 2b of the Bournemouth, Dorset & Poole Energy Efficiency Strategy (2009) relating to existing homes:

"to achieve an average SAP (Standard Assessment Procedure) rating of 65-70 in the housing stock by 2016" and, "to ensure that there will be no dwelling with a SAP rating of less than 35 by 2016".

New residential developments (i.e. additional and replacement dwellings) throughout existing settlements and new neighbourhoods will be encouraged to incorporate water efficiency meeting level 3 of the 'water' component of the 'Code for Sustainable Homes' (unless, having regard to the type of development involved, its design and location, this is not feasible or viable).

Ground water sources will be afforded protection through a criteria-based policy for new development which refers to the Environment Agency's Ground Water Source Protection Zones which, if appropriate, will be shown on the Core Strategy proposals map. The criteria will assess:

- The type of development and its likely impact on ground water in terms of contaminants from construction and from use.
- The need for development affecting a Ground Water Source Protection Zones.
- Proximity to a Ground Water Source Protection Zone.
- The sensitivity of underground aquifers.

Developments involving the conversion or alteration of historic buildings will be expected to demonstrate that they have explored a range of sustainable and low carbon options for construction and energy use and incorporated them into the design where practically possible, provided that this does not harm the character of the building or increase the risk of long-term deterioration to fabric or fittings.

**Why is it Preferred?**

Promotes sustainable construction methods and energy efficiency standards to meet local targets by 2016.

Recognises the fact that above national levels of sustainable construction and energy efficiency are not sustainable on residential development within the Plan area.

Will ensure that the area’s specific water resource implications are addressed via a justified higher standard for water efficiency.

**Does it conform to the rules, regulations and advice?**

National

**Yes**

Local

**Yes**

**Is it informed by evidence?**

**Yes**

Evidence Base for the Bournemouth and Poole, and Weymouth and Dorchester Strategic Housing Market Assessment (2008)

The Dorset Efficiency Strategy (2009)

Dorset Affordable Housing and developer Contribution Viability Study (Three Dragons June 2009)

Environment Agency Catchment Abstraction Management Strategy for the Stour and Avon (2004 and 2006)

Water Resources Plan – Bournemouth and West Hants Water Company (2009)

**Preferred Option ME 8**

**Sustainable development standards for non-residential developments**

Non-residential development throughout existing settlements and the new neighbourhoods will be required to incorporate carbon reduction, water and energy efficiency measures and to demonstrate they have explored a range of sustainable and low carbon options. It is not appropriate to make reference to any particular assessment standard or method until the emerging national policy for non-domestic buildings is adopted.

Why is it Preferred?			
Promotes sustainable construction methods and energy efficiency standards for all non-residential development.			
Does it conform to the rules, regulations and advice?			
National	Yes	Local	Yes
Is it supported by evidence?			Yes
Environment Agency Catchment Abstraction Management Strategy for the Stour and Avon (2004 and 2006)			
Water Resources Plan – Bournemouth and West Hants Water Company (2009)			
The Dorset Efficiency Strategy (2009)			

### Alternative Preferred Option ME 9

**No local policies for sustainable construction, water or energy efficiency.**

For housing, elements of the Code for Sustainable Homes would become mandatory in line with the national programme set out in Building a Greener Future but there would be no additional local policy requirements to incorporate carbon reduction, water or energy efficiency measures. Commercial development and historic buildings would be unaffected by local policies.

Why is it a Preferred Option?			
Does not promote sustainable construction methods and energy efficiency standards for all development in excess of national standards.			
Does it conform to the rules, regulations and advice?			
National	Yes	Local	Yes
Is it informed by evidence?			Yes
Evidence Base for the Bournemouth and Poole, and Weymouth and Dorchester Strategic Housing Market Assessment (2008)			
Dorset Affordable Housing and Developer Contribution Viability Study (Three Dragons June 2009)			

**'Issue: How should our renewable, decentralised and low carbon energy policies apply to new development?**

**12.21** (Note: the following options are not mutually exclusive and could all form a set of policy measures.)

**Preferred Option ME 10**

**Renewable energy standards for residential and non-residential developments**

At least 10% of the total energy used in new development of more than 10 dwellings (or 0.5ha) or 1,000m<sup>2</sup> of non-residential floorspace (or if the site is 1ha or larger) will come from decentralised, renewable or low carbon sources (unless, having regard to the type of development involved and its location and design, this is not feasible or viable).

The Councils will investigate options for district heating and/or power facilities. Developments may be required to connect to such a facility where appropriate, feasible and viable.

**Why is it Preferred?**

Promotes renewable energy standards for all development.

**Does it conform to the rules, regulations and advice?**

**National**

**Yes**

**Local**

**Yes**

**Is it informed by evidence?**

**Yes**

The Dorset Energy Efficiency Strategy (2009)

## Preferred Option ME 11

### Renewable energy standards for residential and non-residential development within larger developments and within the new neighbourhoods

Larger developments within existing settlements (10 dwellings or 0.5ha residential land area, or 1,000m<sup>2</sup> of non-residential floorspace or 1ha or larger) and all development within the new neighbourhoods will be expected to achieve above the minimum 10% target for energy from decentralised, renewable or low carbon sources. This option can only be adopted, however, if the findings of the ongoing master planning of the new neighbourhoods and viability work demonstrate that clear opportunities exist to provide a higher proportion of energy from decentralised, renewable or low carbon sources, and are shown to be feasible and viable. No specific target can yet be proposed, because evidence is not yet available to inform what higher target would be most appropriate within the bounds of development viability and geographic constraints in order to satisfy paragraph 33 of the Supplement to PPS1. The Councils must await completion of the master planning assessment to allow an informed decision on a viable renewable energy option to be taken following Preferred Options consultation.

To prevent a piecemeal approach, the preferred option would consider each urban extension as one 'larger development' and would, therefore, require that ALL schemes within the extensions meet the higher target (unless, having regard to the type of development involved and its location and design, this is not feasible or viable). It is anticipated that this would require district-wide energy generation such as a combined heat and power plant. To meet the higher targets, energy provision could either be provided on-site or through commuted sums to the Council which would then finance a large off-site facility. To maximise this potential, the Councils will investigate opportunities to connect such a scheme to existing development adjacent to the new neighbourhoods.

If the evidence base does not justify a higher target, non-residential development within larger developments and within the new neighbourhoods will be required to meet the 10% target.

#### Why is it Preferred?

Promotes higher renewable energy standards for all development on larger sites.

#### Does it conform to the rules, regulations and advice?

National

Yes

Local

Yes

#### Is it informed by evidence?

No

This option will only proceed if it is supported by evidence from the Master Planning work currently being undertaken in respect of possible new neighbourhoods across the Plan area.

**Preferred Option ME 12**

**Financial contribution for small or exempt developments (carbon offset fund)**

Where developments cannot feasibly or viably provide the required proportion of their total energy requirements from decentralised, renewable or low carbon energy sources as part of the development, the Core Strategy will require a financial contribution towards off-site carbon reduction measures. These measures, such as district-wide heating facilities or domestic micro-generation, improvements to the energy efficiency of existing buildings, or even planting and habitat creation, will mitigate the carbon released from the new development. This approach would operate along the lines of a 'carbon offset fund' which has been successfully implemented by councils elsewhere. Contributions would be pooled and used to fund an area-wide decentralised, renewable or low carbon energy source elsewhere in the district (or other carbon saving measure) thereby offsetting the carbon emissions from the contributing developments.

**Why is it Preferred?**

Will enable all scales of development to contribute to carbon-reduction targets.

**Does it conform to the rules, regulations and advice?**

National

**Yes**

Local

**Yes**

**Is it informed by evidence?**

**Yes**

Strategic Housing Land Availability Studies in Christchurch and East Dorset (2008 and 2009)

Dorset Affordable Housing and Developer Contribution Viability Study (Three Dragons June 2009).

**Preferred Option ME 13**

**Energy-generating technologies**

Future policies will not prescribe which type of renewable technology to incorporate into developments. The suitability of the chosen technologies should be judged on a site-specific basis and developers will be expected to assess a range of suitable options including district-wide and/or micro-generation. Where specific opportunities exist, such as at new neighbourhoods, the development of Combined Heat and Power networks (or other district-wide/community heating and power) will be favoured. As part of the urban extension master planning, the Councils will carry out a feasibility assessment to identify which technologies and locations are most appropriate and how they may be financed through new development and other funding sources. As new neighbourhoods provide the best opportunity to deliver carbon-reducing measures which would not be feasible elsewhere in the urban areas due to the small-scale of individual developments, they will be the focus of feasibility studies and possible developer contributions policies.

**Why is it Preferred?**

Will ensure that larger-scale residential developments provide carbon-reducing schemes within the sites or on a decentralised District-wide basis.

Does it conform to the rules, regulations and advice?			
National	Yes	Local	Yes
Is it informed by evidence?			Yes
REvision 2020			

**12.22 Issue: How should our policies direct development away from flood risk areas while also making best use of limited development land?**

**12.23** (Note: the following options are not mutually exclusive and could all form a set of policy measures.)

### Preferred Option ME 14

#### Development within areas at risk of flooding

PPS25 is considered adequate, when adapted and clarified by the Strategic Flood Risk Assessments to suit local circumstances, to inform decisions regarding the suitability of all forms of development within flood zones and no local policy is therefore required. Only where applications or proposed sites for allocation satisfy the requirements of PPS25 will development be permitted. Providing safe unaided egress from the development to ground beyond the flood risk area shall be a requirement of all development which intensifies use. The Core Strategy will define the extent of each flood zone and the Councils will provide whatever additional information is available through the Strategic Flood Risk Assessments to inform applications. In their determination of planning applications, the Councils will make reference to all available information on flood risk from all sources of flooding at the time of application and will consult with the Environment Agency.

This option will not form a stand-alone policy.

Christchurch Council will prepare a Supplementary Planning Document on the topic of flood risk to provide guidance for developers on how to deliver Core Strategy policies, interpret and use the Strategic Flood Risk Assessment flood maps to determine the site level degree of risk, and provide advice on how to apply the Sequential and Exception tests locally.

Why is it Preferred?			
This option will ensure that new development is targeted away from areas of flood risk.			
Does it conform to the rules, regulations and advice?			
National	Yes	Local	Yes
Is it informed by evidence?			Yes
Strategic Housing Land Availability Studies in Christchurch and East Dorset (2008 and 2009)			
Strategic Flood Risk Assessment Level 1 (Christchurch and East Dorset) (2008)			
Strategic Flood Risk Assessment Level 2 (Christchurch only) (2009)			
The Christchurch and East Dorset Employment Land Review (2010)			

## Preferred Option ME 15

### Flood mitigation measures

Local policy will support the PPS25 requirement that all developments (in all flood zones and including new neighbourhoods) will be required to demonstrate that flood risk does not increase as a result, and that options have been sought to reduce flood risk overall. Post-development surface water run-off must not exceed pre-development levels and options should have been sought to reduce levels of run off overall. The primary means of satisfying this policy will be through the use of Sustainable Drainage Systems and a range of flood resistance and resilience measures. Space for such measures should be set aside within larger developments.

All developments (including redevelopments and extensions which require planning permission) within areas at risk of flooding will be required to incorporate appropriate flood resistance and resilience measures as a means of 'future proofing' against the effects of climate change. Historic buildings and sites may be exempt from this option where measures would harm their character or increase the risk of long-term deterioration to fabric or fittings.

Details of the most appropriate types and layouts for Sustainable Drainage Systems and the most appropriate resistance and resilience measures will be provided by the forthcoming Flood and Water Management Bill, the existing East Dorset Supplementary Planning Document on Sustainable Drainage Systems, the proposed Christchurch Supplementary Planning Document on Flood Risk and other local evidence (including the Strategic Flood Risk Assessments) available at the time of application.

### Why is it Preferred?

Will ensure all scales of development which take place within the Plan area do not increase flood risk.

### Does it conform to the rules, regulations and advice?

National

Yes

Local

Yes

### Is it informed by evidence?

Yes

Strategic Flood Risk Assessment Level 1 (Christchurch and East Dorset) (2008)

Strategic Flood Risk Assessment Level 2 (Christchurch only) (2009)

## Preferred Option ME 16

### Flood management strategies and funding flood defence improvements

For developments within a flood risk area which pass the PPS25 Sequential Test, but where risk can not be adequately mitigated on site, a flood management strategy and delivery plan will be required prior to the grant of consent. The strategy will identify the measures required to reduce flood risk and surface water run-off at the site for the duration of its design life, making it safe (including unaided access/egress during times of flood) and ensuring that flood risk does not increase elsewhere as a result. The delivery plan will identify the level and source of funding required for such measures and set out a realistic and achievable timetable for implementation. For very large schemes, area-wide flood attenuation measures may be required.

Flood defences will be identified on the Councils' schedules of essential infrastructure and development will be charged under a tariff-based developer contributions scheme. Where development is of a sufficient scale to fund flood alleviation works to make that development safe throughout its design life, works in kind will be considered where appropriate.

### Why is it Preferred?

Will ensure that all development adequately addresses the issue of flood risk, and that the cost of ameliorating the risk is borne by development contributions across the Plan area.

### Does it conform to the rules, regulations and advice?

National

Yes

Local

Yes

### Is it informed by evidence?

Yes

Strategic Housing Land Availability Studies in Christchurch and East Dorset (2008 and 2009)

Strategic Flood Risk Assessment Level 1 (Christchurch and East Dorset) (2008)

Strategic Flood Risk Assessment Level 2 (Christchurch only) (2009)

Dorset Affordable Housing and developer Contribution Viability Study (Three Dragons June 2009)

## Alternative Preferred Option ME 17

### Flood management strategies and funding flood defence improvements

If future government guidance does not support a tariff based approach section 106 planning obligations conforming to Circular 05/05 will be used instead. Due to the limitations imposed by Circular 05/05, developer contributions towards improvements to strategic flood defence infrastructure such as major river and coastal defences would not be required on an area-wide basis. Throughout the Core Strategy period and beyond, there will be insufficient quantity of development within flood zones to make a worthwhile contribution towards expensive strategic flood defences which could protect large areas in the long term. However, where development is of a sufficient scale to fund improvements to major defences to make that development safe throughout its design life, financial contributions or works in kind would be considered where appropriate.

Why is it Preferred?			
Will ensure that any major development within a flood zone will fund the necessary flood defences to make such a scheme acceptable			
Does it conform to the rules, regulations and advice?			
National	Yes	Local	Yes
Is it informed by evidence?			Yes
Strategic Housing Land Availability Studies in Christchurch and East Dorset (2008 and 2009)			
Strategic Flood Risk Assessment Level 1 (Christchurch and East Dorset) (2008)			
Strategic Flood Risk Assessment Level 2 (Christchurch only) (2009)			
Dorset Affordable Housing and developer Contribution Viability Study (Three Dragons June 2009)			

**12.24 Issue: How should we consider development in areas at risk from coastal erosion?**

**Preferred Option ME 18**

**Development within areas at risk of coastal erosion**

The supplement to Planning Policy Statement 25 ‘Development and Coastal Change’ identifies that, where the policy approach of the shoreline management plan is to hold the line for the whole period covered by the Plan (100 years), it will not be necessary to identify a Coastal Change Management Area and associated development management policies. Coastal Change Management Areas are defined as areas likely to be affected by physical changes to the coast. The overall approach of maintaining defences as identified in the draft Shoreline Management Plan 2 does not require the identification of Coastal Change Management Areas in Christchurch.

The Christchurch Strategic Flood Risk Assessment Level 2 identifies areas of the Borough affected by increased flood risk from tidal and fluvial flooding to 2126 taking into account the effects of climate change. PPS25 informed by the Christchurch Strategic Flood Risk Assessment will inform decisions about the suitability of development in areas affected by increased flood risk.

Why is it Preferred?			
Development within Christchurch Borough adjacent to the coastal area will be managed in accordance with National and local guidance and evidence.			
Does it conform to the rules, regulations and advice?			
National	Yes	Local	Yes
Is it informed by evidence?			Yes
Strategic Housing Land Availability Studies in Christchurch and East Dorset (2008 and 2009)			
Strategic Flood Risk Assessment Level 1 (Christchurch and East Dorset) (2008)			
Strategic Flood Risk Assessment Level 2 (Christchurch only) (2009)			