

10 Ferndown and West Parley Housing, Employment and Town Centre

Introduction

10.1 Ferndown with a population of 16,700 and West Parley with 3,500 residents combine to form the largest urban area in East Dorset. Also within the Town and Parish are the historic villages of Longham and Hampreston. Both have elderly profiles, particularly West Parley where a third of residents are over the age of 65.

10.2 Both settlements have grown significantly over the last 100 years, when the current urban area was once a mere scatter of villas and small dwellings. As the population has expanded new facilities have been provided, mainly in Ferndown, so that the settlements now have a range of services available.

10.3 The Natural Environment

10.4 Much of the land now occupied by Ferndown and West Parley used to be heathland. What remains can be found to the north of the urban area and at Ferndown and West Parley Commons. These lie adjacent to the urban areas so limit the opportunity to build new homes.

10.5 To the south of the urban area the River Stour flows through a wide floodplain. This area provides good opportunity for informal recreation, as well as habitat for protected species.

10.6 Shopping, Facilities and Services

10.7 Ferndown Town Centre has a wide range of shopping facilities and services that are easily accessed by foot, bicycle and public transport, as well as by car. Penny's Walk, with its large foodstore acts as a key destination. This was built in the 1980's and could be significantly improved with additional shopping and environmental enhancement.

10.8 Out of town retail stores are located to the north of Ferndown at Trickett's Cross. This area is not easily accessible by pedestrians or cyclists.

10.9 West Parley village centre is a large parade of shops located at the Crossroads. It offers very limited local facilities, with most of the shops being for specialist home improvements.

10.10 GP Surgeries are located in Ferndown and serve the wider area, including West Parley. Residents make use of the hospitals in Bournemouth and Poole.

10.11 The settlements have a full range of schools although recently there have been concerns that they have surplus spaces.

10.12 Transport

10.13 Ferndown and West Parley suffer from considerable amounts of through traffic travelling from the A31(T) into the conurbation. This leads to severe problems in Ferndown Town Centre, through Longham, where heavy goods vehicles are directed to reach Poole Port, and at Parley Crossroads.

10.14 The 2001 Census identified that 85% of commuters were car drivers or passengers. Even so, the urban area is reasonably well served with regular and frequent bus services.

10.15 Housing

10.16 Generally there is very little social housing in the area, with the exception being Heatherlands. Additionally, there are also few private rented properties, so the large majority of homes are privately owned, a large proportion of which are owned outright with no mortgage.

10.17 About 30% of homes are detached and 40% are bungalows. Almost 50% of homes are considered to be under occupied.

10.18 Employment

10.19 Ferndown benefits from major employment opportunities. As of 2008, there were 1,300 businesses employing about 11,600 people. The Ferndown Industrial Estate, along with the Uddens Trading Estate and East Dorset Trade Park form the largest single employment location in Dorset. To the south east the business parks at Bournemouth International Airport offer further large employment locations. Additionally, Ferndown Town Centre provides significant levels of employment as does the nearby Bournemouth/Poole conurbation.

Ferndown Town Centre

10.20 Ferndown Town Centre has about 120 units of which half are retail and the others are used for commercial or miscellaneous uses. The Centre is reasonably healthy, but is showing signs of strain due to changes in the way that we shop and access services. To maintain and improve the vitality and viability of the Town Centre it is important that its attractiveness is improved, both in terms of the retail and service offer and also the environment.

Relevant Evidence

- Joint Retail Assessment (Nathaniel Lichfield and Partners 2008)

Policy FWP1

Ferndown Town Centre

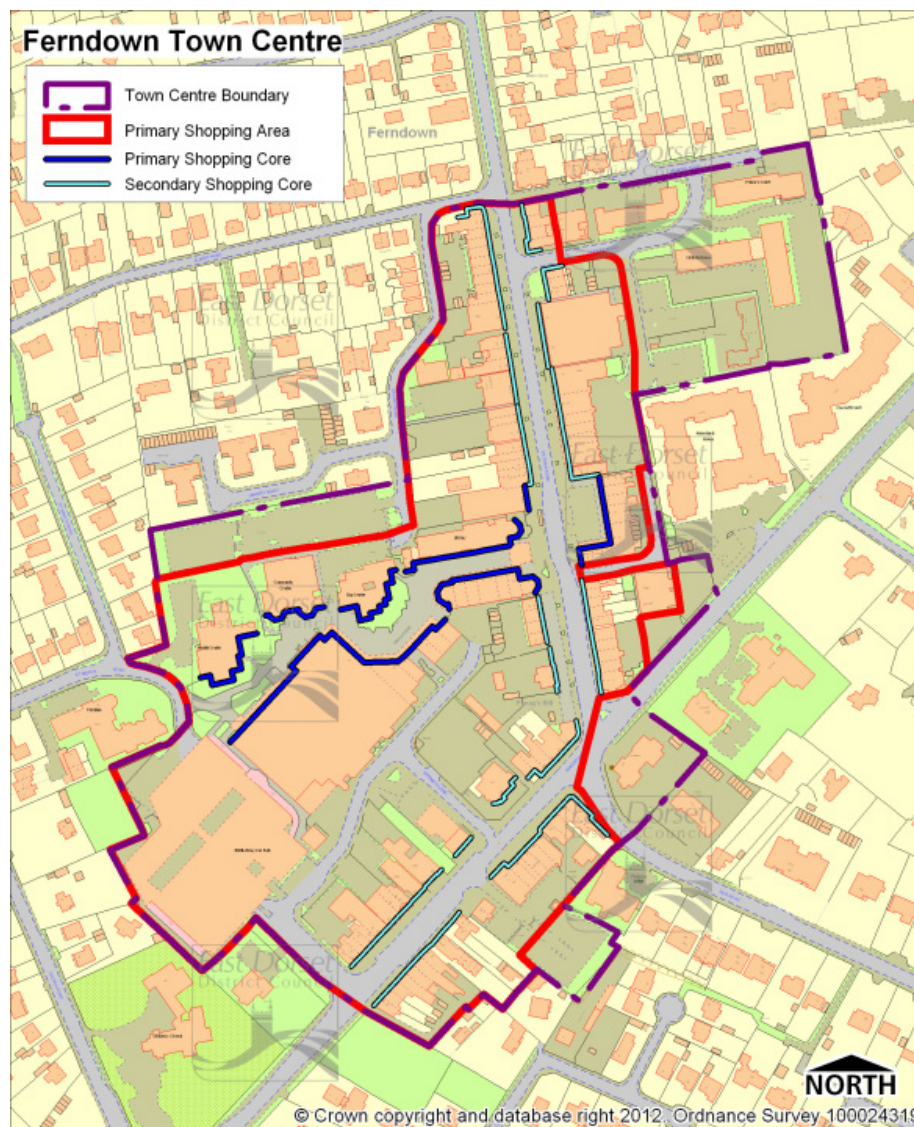
Our vision is that Ferndown will continue to act as a key Town Centre in the District and will remain a key focus for retail development. The comparison and convenience retail offer will be enhanced and the shopping environment improved to provide a more pleasant and pedestrian friendly townscape, public transport routes will be supported, and facilities and services will continue to be located in this central location for residents and visitors to the town.

To achieve this vision:

1. Retail uses will be expanded and enhanced to promote the vitality and viability of the centre; convenience units up to 2,064 sq m and comparison units up to 4,239 sq m. The strategy will seek to enhance the niche retail offer and with a mix of unit sizes improve the presence of national multiples, to provide for better choice in comparison shopping. An enhanced pedestrianised Penny's Walk will help to attract national multiple chains whilst niche retail shops will continue to thrive on Victoria Road.
2. Residents of the town will continue to have access to a variety of important community services and cultural facilities located in the town centre, such as the Barrington Theatre and the Library. These will be retained and where possible enhanced.
3. The evening economy uses such as restaurants, cafés and pubs will be supported in the secondary shopping locations to enhance the vibrancy of the afternoon and evening economy of the town.
4. The townscape quality of the centre will be improved to achieve a safe, high quality and attractive environment that will give the centre a distinct character and enhance its sense of identity. This will benefit residents, visitors and businesses, improving ease of movement around the town for pedestrians and cyclists and offer better legibility.
5. Higher density residential and commercial development will take place alongside the projected requirement for retail growth to provide for a balanced, mixed use environment.

6. In order to improve the vitality of the town centre and improve pedestrian safety around the town, traffic management and calming measures will be introduced to reduce pedestrian/vehicular conflict in Victoria and Ringwood Roads together with the diversion of Heavy Goods Vehicles. Public transport will be promoted as the primary means of travelling into the town centre.
7. To minimise congestion and air pollution, the use of sustainable modes of transport will be encouraged. Ferndown benefits from a comprehensive public transport network providing links both within the town and its surrounding areas via bus services. Public transport, cycling and walking will be promoted as the primary means of travelling into town.
8. The Council will ensure that appropriate public parking levels and accessibility are maintained within the town to maintain the vitality and viability of the centre, with an appropriate signage strategy.

The Town Centre as defined by the Town Centre Boundary will be the focus for town centre uses including higher density residential, employment, retail, leisure and entertainment, offices, arts and culture and tourism development subject to compliance with other national and local policy.



Map 10.1 Ferndown Town Centre

Delivery and Monitoring

10.21 This policy will be delivered by:

- The development management process.
- Close working with the local community, commercial interests, landowners, other authorities and service providers.

10.22 The policy will be monitored through:

- Annual pedestrian footfall counts.
- An annual survey of town centre uses.
- Updates to the Retail Assessment.

Green Belt Policy

Forest View Drive and Woodland Walk, Ferndown

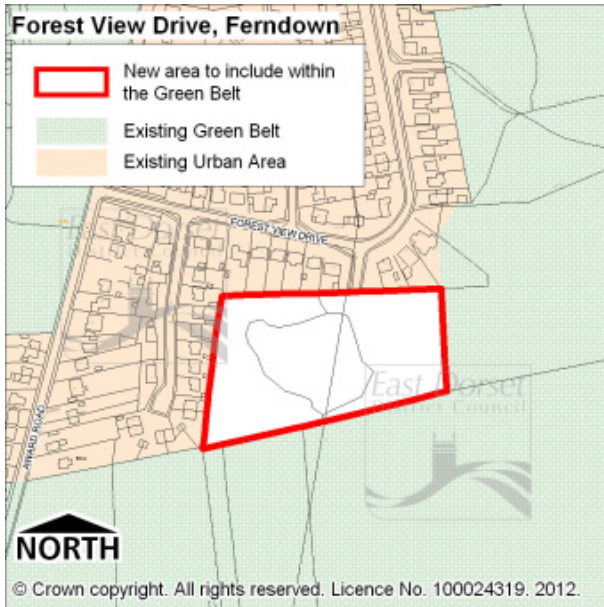
10.23 The Ferndown Local Plan (1989) defined the Green Belt boundaries for the Town. An area at Woodland Walk was left outside the Green Belt and allocated for housing development. This land was subsequently safeguarded from development in the East Dorset Local Plan (2001), awaiting a review. The land is now heavily wooded and the trees are protected by preservation orders. Access is also very difficult to achieve. As a result, the land is no longer considered suitable for housing development. This change in circumstances means that it is appropriate to alter the boundaries of the Green Belt to include the land.

10.24 This policy redefines the Green Belt boundary at Forest View Drive, Ferndown. When the Green Belt was first defined this area was left outside its boundary and allocated for housing development. The East Dorset Local Plan safeguarded the land with this to be reconsidered when a review took place. Subsequently, it has become inappropriate to locate new housing within 400 metres of an internationally protected heathland, as this site is. It is therefore now incapable of being developed for housing and this represents the exceptional circumstances necessary for the land to now be included in the Green Belt. The land is open in character, so therefore meets the fundamental aim of Green Belt policy and its designation would prevent urban sprawl and protect the countryside.

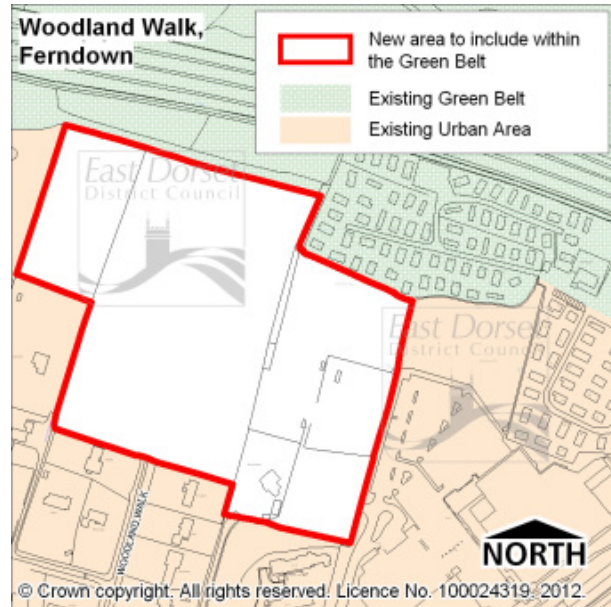
Policy FWP2

Forest View Drive and Woodland Walk Green Belt Boundaries, Ferndown

The Green Belt boundary will be redrawn to include land within it at Forest View Drive and Woodland Walk, Ferndown.



Map 10.2 Forest View Drive Green Belt Boundaries



Map 10.3 Woodland Walk Green Belt Boundaries

New Neighbourhoods

10.25 Ferndown and West Parley combine to make the largest urban area in East Dorset. The population is well served by services and facilities and is very well located to access employment opportunities. For this reason the area is considered suitable as a location for New Neighbourhoods. As a result the Council has undertaken a Masterplan exercise to identify where these could be located and how they could be best laid out and delivered. A very large part of the urban edge is inappropriate because it is too close to protected heathlands. This has restricted the area of search to the south of the main urban area. Even within this area there are important constraints, including the Dudsbury Hillfort ancient monument, airport safeguarding zones, floodplain, settlement coalescence and traffic congestion. The identified New Neighbourhoods are planned to provide housing and other facilities within the context of these constraints and in West Parley alleviate the traffic congestion and provide an improved local centre to serve the local community.

Ferndown

Land Adjacent to Holmwood House

10.26 This New Neighbourhood can help to deliver much needed housing and add to the important open space at Poor Common while ensuring the Green Belt gap between Longham and Ferndown is maintained for the long term. To achieve this, the southern limits of development must leave a clear break in development and preserve open land to be used as informal parkland. Access is to come from Ringwood Road to the north of Holmwood House in order to preserve the Green Belt gap.

Relevant Evidence

- The East Dorset New Neighbourhood Masterplan Reports.

Policy FWP3

Holmwood House New Neighbourhood, Ferndown

A New Neighbourhood is allocated adjacent to Holmwood House, south of Ferndown to provide about 110 homes and large areas of informal open space. To enable this the Green Belt boundary will be amended to exclude the land identified for new housing.

Layout and design

- The New Neighbourhood will be set out according to the principles of the Masterplan Reports.
- A design code will be agreed by the Council, setting out the required standards.

Green Infrastructure

- A Suitable Alternative Natural Greenspace strategy is to be implemented as part of the provision of the new housing as required by Policy ME3. This includes open space to be provided south of the allocated housing which will enhance the existing open space at Poor Common and protect the Green Belt gap between Ferndown and Longham.

Transport and access

- Vehicular access is to be provided from Ringwood Road to the north of Holmwood House.
- Dedicated pedestrian and cycling links are to be provided throughout the housing area connecting into the existing networks to the north, east and west.



Map 10.4 Holmwood House New Neighbourhood, Ferndown

Delivery and Monitoring

10.27 This policy will be delivered by:

- The development management process.
- The Architect's Panel will be used to inform decisions.
- Close working with the local community, landowners, other authorities and service providers.

10.28 The policy will be monitored through:

- Building for Life Assessments.
- The annual housing completions survey.

Coppins Nursery

10.29 This small site offers the opportunity to provide much needed housing within reasonably close proximity to facilities, services and employment opportunities. In order to protect the Green Belt gap between Longham and Ferndown it is important that at least half of the site is set out as informal open space extending the current Poor Common open space. This along with the open space allocated in Policy FWP3 will provide a substantial Suitable Alternative Natural Greenspace which will help to divert people from nearby heathlands and protect their nature conservation quality.

Relevant Evidence

- The East Dorset New Neighbourhood Masterplan Reports.

Policy FWP4

Coppins New Neighbourhood, Ferndown

A New Neighbourhood is allocated at Coppins Nursery, south of Ferndown to provide about 30 homes. To enable this the Green Belt boundary will be amended to exclude the land identified for new housing.

Layout and design

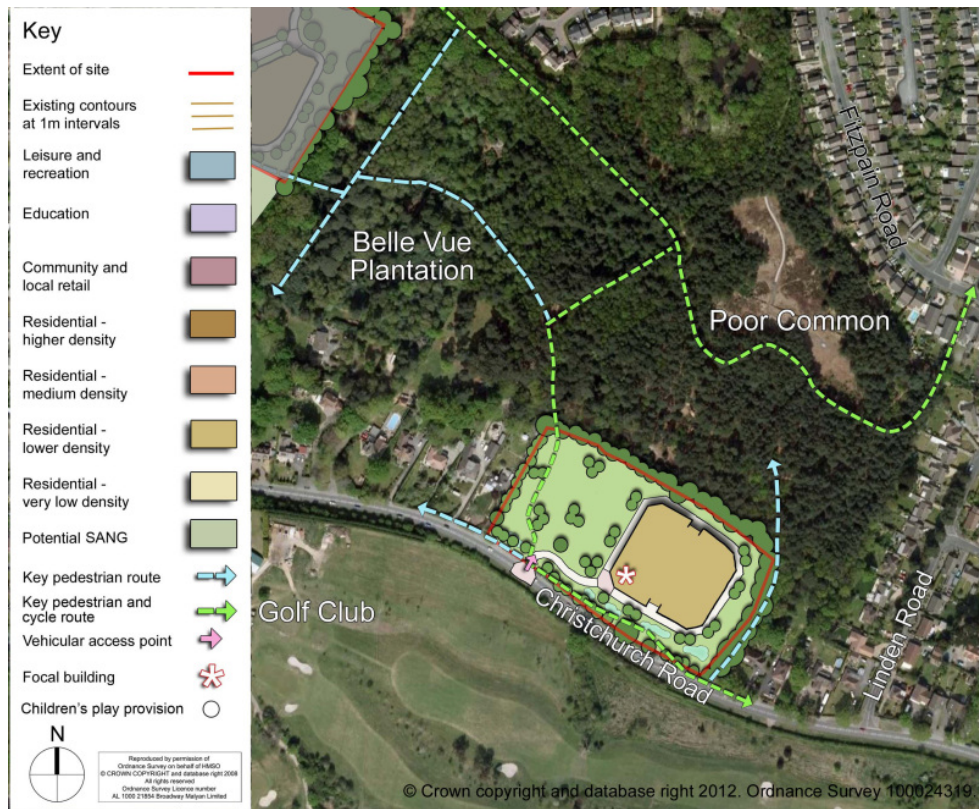
- The New Neighbourhood will be set out according to the principles of the Masterplan Reports.
- A design code will be agreed by the Council, setting out the required standards.

Green Infrastructure

- A Suitable Alternative Natural Greenspace strategy is to be implemented as part of the provision of the new housing as required by Policy ME3. Open space is to be provided to enhance the existing open space at Poor Common, providing green links along the southern fringe of the urban area. This should extend to at least 50% of the identified site.

Transport and access

- Vehicular access is to be provided from Christchurch Road.
- Dedicated pedestrian and cycling links are to be provided throughout the housing area and link into the existing networks to the north, east and west.



Map 10.5 Coppins New Neighbourhood, Ferndown

Delivery and Monitoring

10.30 This policy will be delivered by:

- The development management process.
- The Architect's Panel which will be used to inform decisions.
- Close working with the local community, landowners, other authorities and service providers.

10.31 The policy will be monitored through:

- Building for Life Assessments.
- The annual housing completions survey.

West Parley

The Village Centre

10.32 West Parley Village Centre is presently compromised by a poor urban environment, dominated by roads and hardstanding. Many of the shop units are occupied by specialist home improvement retailers that do not provide exclusively for the needs of the local area. Parley Crossroads suffers from severe congestion and over time the Highways Authority has implemented a range of measures to alleviate this, but at the expense of local environmental amenity. Roads have been widened and it is now the case that well over 1 hectare of tarmac covers the area around the Crossroads and shopping service roads. The area to the south of Christchurch Road, New Road and the associated service road and car parking are about 35 metres wide which is the equivalent of eight lanes of a normal highway with standard footpaths on either side. Such engineering solutions have maximised the effectiveness of the Crossroads in terms of traffic movement, but this is clearly not enough as severe congestion is common during ever lengthening peak times in the morning and afternoon. Consequently, the centre of the village is very unattractive, particularly for pedestrians and cyclists.



Map 10.6 Parley Cross

10.33 The local community and Council are left with a difficult choice. The allocation of New Neighbourhoods gives the opportunity to reorganise traffic movements and alleviate congestion at the Crossroads, but results in a significant change to the built character of the area. If New Neighbourhoods are not allocated, traffic alleviation will have to rely upon public funds and alternative solutions. Previous assessments of the Crossroads have identified that limited congestion alleviation can be provided if a gyratory system were to be built which would expand the road dominated area to 90 metres wide. This would simply be a traffic alleviation solution which would significantly increase the highways area and lead to further deterioration of the urban environment. Additionally, due to funding shortfalls it may not be implemented in the 15 year lifetime of the Core Strategy, leaving the residents of the area with a deteriorating situation.



Map 10.7 Previously suggested transport solution

10.34 The Council takes the view that it should positively plan the area to significantly improve the environmental quality of New Road and Christchurch Road, provide improved services and facilities for the local community, deliver much needed new housing and facilitate the setting out and safeguarding of very large areas of Suitable Alternative Natural Greenspace and more formal areas of open space.

10.35 Policies FWP6 and FWP7 provide the potential to radically change the Parley Crossroads, removing 30% of traffic movements and enabling significant environmental improvements to the New Road area. This includes removing traffic lanes and turning movements. This will allow a much improved pedestrian environment to be provided with wider paved areas, landscaping and crossing points where people will not have to wait excessive amounts of time to cross New Road and Christchurch Road. Policy FWP6 allocates an area to the east of New Road to provide new retail and commercial development to extend the range for the local community. This will create a two sided shopping street with a greater sense of place than currently exists.

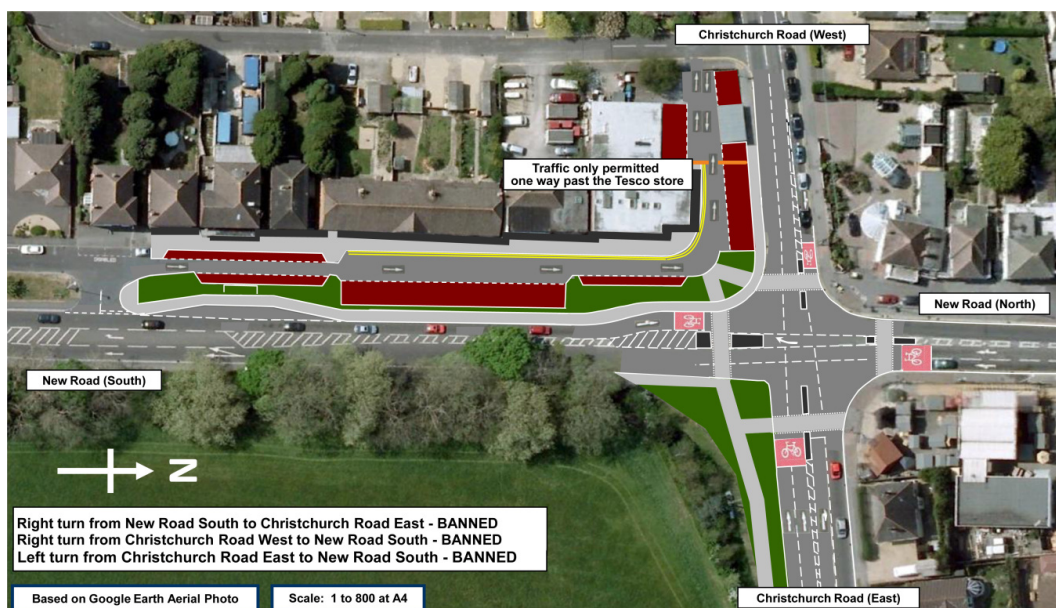
Relevant Evidence

- The East Dorset New Neighbourhood Masterplan Reports.
- Burro Hapold B3073 Corridor Study 2011.

Policy FWP5

West Parley Village Centre Enhancement Scheme

A major environmental enhancement of West Parley Village Centre is to be implemented to improve its vitality and viability. New public spaces, shops, services and facilities are to be provided in conjunction with wholesale changes to the Parley Crossroads and the associated service roads. This relies upon new link roads to be provided in conjunction with the New Neighbourhoods allocated in policies FWP6 and FWP7.



Map 10.8 West Parley Village Centre Enhancement Scheme

New Neighbourhoods

Land to the East of New Road, West Parley

10.36 This is a flat featureless area of land bordered on three sides by urban development. It offers the opportunity to provide much needed new housing, traffic alleviation, community, retail and commercial services and facilities, as well as significant areas of publicly accessible Suitable Alternative Natural Greenspace, alongside more formal open space. It creates a chance to provide a more welcoming village centre with an attractive sense of place.

10.37 The New Neighbourhood must provide traffic alleviation for the Crossroads and substantial areas of Suitable Alternative Natural Greenspace to attract people away from the protected heathland at Parley Common. This will include parkland to both the east and west of Church Lane as well as the south of the new housing extending to about 25 hectares (60 acres). Additionally, a more formal park is to be provided adjacent to an extension to the village centre which can provide a village square and additional shops and services.

Relevant Evidence

- The East Dorset New Neighbourhood Masterplan Reports.
- Burro Happold B3073 Corridor Study 2011.

Policy FWP6

East of New Road New Neighbourhood, West Parley

A New Neighbourhood is allocated to deliver about 320 homes, and additions to the village centre which could include a convenience foodstore of about 3,000 sq metres. To enable this the Green Belt boundary will be amended to exclude the land identified for new housing and new commercial and community uses.

Layout and design

- The New Neighbourhood will be set out according to the principles of the Masterplan Reports.
- A design code will be agreed by the Council, setting out the required standards.

Green Infrastructure

- A Suitable Alternative Natural Greenspace strategy is to be implemented as part of the provision of the new housing as required by Policy ME3. This is to incorporate very significant areas of open space to the east of Church Lane, to the south of the allocated housing area and between the allocated development area and housing on Church Lane.
- A park is to be provided adjacent to the village centre.

Transport and access

- Vehicular access is to be provided via a new link road that will join Christchurch Road and New Road to the south of the existing urban area. This road is also to divert traffic from the Parley Crossroads.
- Vehicular access to the village centre extension is to come from the link road.
- Dedicated pedestrian and cycling links are to be provided throughout the housing area with connections into the existing networks to the north, east, west and south towards Bournemouth.
- Improvements to public transport services.

Phasing

- The link road must be fully operational prior to the opening of a convenience foodstore, or the occupation of 50% of the new homes.



Map 10.9 East of New Road New Neighbourhood, West Parley

Land to the West of New Road at Ridgeway, West Parley

10.38 A New Neighbourhood in this location offers the opportunity to provide much needed housing, significant areas of Suitable Alternative Natural Greenspaces to attract people from nearby heaths and a link road to divert traffic away from Parley Crossroads. This area is more attractive in terms of landscape quality than land to the east of New Road. The site rises to the west towards the Dudsbury Hillfort and has a mature treed framework to the south and west which contains it from long distance views in these directions. To the east and north the land adjoins the urban area. It is important that the nature of development in this location respects the form of the land and landscaping is used to break up the built area.

10.39 The Hillfort is an ancient monument, so development must be kept clear from it and open space used to maintain its integrity.

Relevant Evidence

- The East Dorset New Neighbourhood Masterplan Reports.
- Burro Happold B3073 Corridor Study 2011.

Policy FWP7

West of New Road New Neighbourhood, West Parley

A New Neighbourhood is allocated to deliver about 200 homes, and facilitate major improvements to the village centre. To enable this the Green Belt boundary will be amended to exclude the land identified for new housing.

Layout and design

- The New Neighbourhood will be set out according to the principles of the Masterplan Reports.
- A design code will be agreed by the Council, setting out the required standards.
- Development is to be kept at least 75 metres from the Dudsbury Hillfort Ancient Monument. The land between is to be set out as parkland.

Green Infrastructure

- A Suitable Alternative Natural Greenspace strategy is to be implemented as part of the provision of the new housing as required by Policy ME3. This will significantly extend and enhance public access, providing green links along the southern fringe of the urban area.

Transport and access

- Vehicular access is to be provided via a new link road that will join Christchurch Road and New Road to the south of the existing urban area. This road is to divert traffic from the Parley Crossroads enabling environmental enhancement to the village centre.

Phasing

- The link road must be operational prior to the occupation of 50% of the new homes.



Map 10.10 West of New Road New Neighbourhood, West Parley

Delivery and Monitoring

10.40 These policies will be delivered by:

- The development management process.
- The Architect's Panel which will be used to inform decisions.
- Contributions from the Community Infrastructure Levy that will be used to support transport improvements.
- Close working with the local community, landowners, other authorities and service providers.

10.41 These policies will be monitored through:

- Building for Life Assessments.
- The annual housing completions survey.

Employment

Blunt's Farm, Ferndown Industrial Estate

10.42 This land is owned by the Forestry Commission. It is very well related to the Ferndown and Uddens Industrial Estates, which forms the largest area of employment in Dorset, with about 5,000 employees and permission for a further 9 hectares of employment development. It is close to the strategic highway network, although this part of it suffers from congestion. Local facilities are nearby, but further support services, such as eating and small shopping establishments would be beneficial. The land is close to regular bus services. A small part of the land is identified as a Site of Nature Conservation Interest.

Relevant Evidence

- The East Dorset Employment Land Review
- The SE Dorset Workspace Strategy Update (2012)

Policy FWP8

Blunt's Farm Employment Allocation, Ferndown

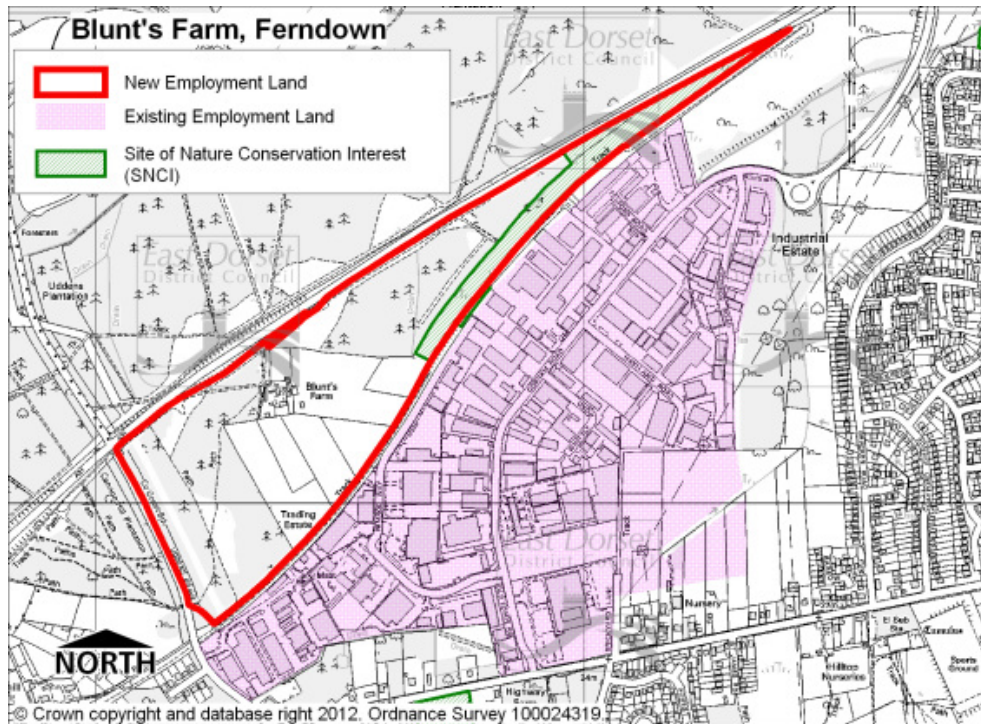
30 hectares of land to the west of Ferndown and Uddens Industrial Estates is removed from the Green Belt and allocated for employment development.

This should involve:

- The provision of B1 (Office and Light Industrial), B2 (General Industrial) and B8 (Warehousing and Distribution) employment uses.
- Ancillary support services, such as cafés.

Prerequisites for development include:

- Approval of a detailed development brief, subject to public consultation.
- Agreement of a comprehensive travel plan including the provision of regular bus services and cycle links towards Wimborne and Ferndown Centres.
- A strategy to be agreed with the Council that ensures no harm to the nearby designated nature conservation sites including Uddens Heath SSSI and the Moors River System SSSI will derive from the estate. Particular regard to the water environment will be needed and in this respect the use of Sustainable Drainage Systems to mitigate any potential impacts will be expected to form part of the strategy.
- Protection of the Site of Nature Conservation Interest.
- Retention of significant landscape buffers within the northern and western parts of the site. This buffer should include heathland habitat which will go towards protecting, enhancing and expanding the habitats of European protected species of which there is a known presence nearby.



Map 10.11 Blunt's Farm Employment Allocation, Ferndown

Delivery and Monitoring

10.43 This policy will be delivered by:

- The development management process.
- The Architect's Panel which will be used to inform decisions.
- Close working with the local community, landowners, other authorities and service providers.

10.44 The policy will be monitored through:

- The annual employment completions survey.

