

## 8 Wimborne and Colehill Housing and Town Centre

### Introduction

**8.1** Wimborne is the historic centre of East Dorset and Colehill is a closely associated major suburban area. The combined Town and Parish population is 13,300. Although the relative importance of the Town has declined, as other nearby settlements have grown, it still offers access to main services, facilities and employment opportunities.

**8.2** Wimborne is renowned for its Georgian architectural quality and, as a result, the historic centre including the St Catherine's area, are important conservation areas. Many of the District's listed buildings are situated in this area.

### **8.3 The Natural Environment**

**8.4** The north western edge of Wimborne adjoins the Cranborne Chase and West Wiltshire Downs Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty.

**8.5** Wimborne sits at the confluence of the Rivers Allen and Stour. These are not protected in themselves, but they do provide habitat for protected species. They also affect the location of development as they cause flooding. Additionally, the area to the north of Wimborne is protected as a Groundwater Source Protection Zone and is a major source of water for the area.

**8.6** Wimborne and Colehill do not lie adjacent to areas of protected heathland. However, they are within 5 km of heaths, a distance within which it has been shown residents have a harmful impact. It is therefore important that any additional housing mitigates this impact through the provision of Suitable Alternative Natural Greenspaces.

### **8.7 Green Belt**

**8.8** Wimborne and Colehill are set within the South East Dorset Green Belt. The Green Belt between the settlements is very narrow and maintains their separate identity. One of the main purposes of the Green Belt is to prevent coalescence of settlements, so this open area is particularly important to protect.

### **8.9 Shopping, Facilities and Services**

**8.10** Wimborne has a very attractive town centre with over 160 shops, including two foodstores. There are a number of national chains in the centre, but it is best known for its independent stores. The town is a popular tourist destination and to meet the demands there are a host of pubs, tearooms and restaurants.

**8.11** Colehill does not have a recognised centre. Local facilities are provided at the northern end of Middlehill Road and at Dales Drive near to Canford Bottom.

**8.12** Wimborne is well catered for in terms of community facilities, including the hospital, doctors' surgeries, day care centre, children's centre, library, community centres and the Tivoli Theatre. Colehill is more limited, but does currently have a small library, St Michael's Church Centre and a well used community hall.

**8.13** Wimborne and Colehill offer a full range of schools. New housing will require further upper school places to be provided within the District. Likewise, there will be pressure on the middle schools to expand and there will be potential need for an additional first school.

### 8.14 Sports and Recreation

**8.15** Wimborne has a good provision of sporting facilities with the Q.E Leisure Centre, rugby clubs, football and two cricket clubs, as well as Redcotts Playing Fields. Colehill, in contrast has very little provision and the Open Space, Sport and Recreation survey highlighted a need to provide more formal playing pitches totalling about 8 hectares. Additionally, Wimborne Football and Rugby Clubs would like to relocate and significantly improve their facilities.

### 8.16 Transport

**8.17** The effectiveness of the A31 (T) is very important in terms of traffic in the Town and Parish. Improvements to Canford Bottom Roundabout are predicted to improve flows and increase accessibility for the area. Wimborne is well catered for by bus services, whereas Colehill has fewer, but regular bus services.

### 8.18 Housing

**8.19** Wimborne has a high proportion of social and private rented properties compared to the rest of East Dorset. Colehill West has very few rented properties with 59% owned with no mortgage. Wimborne is also different in the type of housing available, with over 50% of homes being either terraced or flats. In contrast, Colehill has a large proportion of detached houses and bungalows (78% in Colehill West). Over 60% of dwellings in Colehill West are considered to be under occupied in comparison to a District average 48%. Wimborne is significantly lower at 34%.

### 8.20 Employment

**8.21** There were 860 firms operating in Wimborne and Colehill as of 2009 and 5,600 people worked in the area. Private sector employment in Wimborne is provided mainly in the town centre, at Brook Road, Riverside Park Industrial Estate and at Stone Lane Industrial Estate. Colehill does not have any employment areas, but the Ferndown and Uddens Industrial Estates are nearby. Tourism is very important to Wimborne in particular with the historic town centre being a magnet to visitors. According to the 2001 Census 36% of the workforce lived and worked in Wimborne and Colehill. About 30% travelled to Poole and Bournemouth and 10% to Ferndown.

## Wimborne Town Centre Vision

**8.22** Wimborne Town Centre serves a wide area, including Merley in Poole Borough and a large rural hinterland to the north. It also acts as a major tourist destination.

**8.23** The built form of the historic buildings in the centre makes it difficult for some of the national multiple retailers to find premises, but this does give opportunity for niche independent traders.

**8.24** The Town Centre is healthy compared with many other places, but it is important that its vitality and viability are maintained. Commercial activity is to be encouraged along with a wide range of complementary uses. Additionally, environmental improvements will continue to be identified and implemented.

Key Facts
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Wimborne has about 160 commercial and retail units in the town centre.</li> <li>• 43% of the units are used for commercial or miscellaneous uses.</li> </ul>

## Relevant Evidence

### 8.25 The Joint Retail Assessment (Nathaniel Lichfield and Partners 2008)

#### Policy WMC1

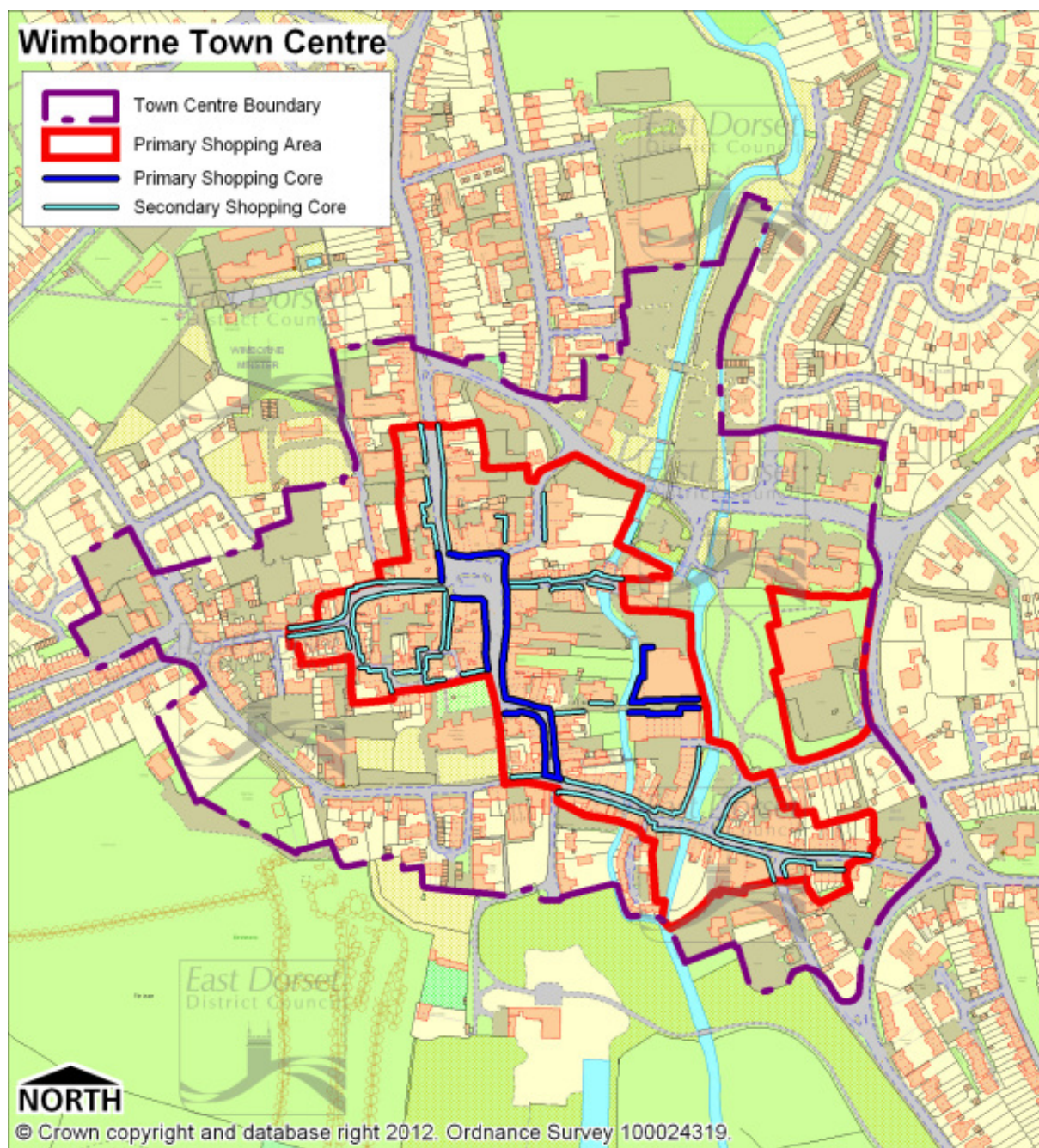
##### Wimborne Minster Town Centre

Wimborne Minster will continue to act as a key town centre in the District and together with Ferndown will be the main focus for retail development. This is because it is well served by public transport and there are more development opportunities within the centre. The shopping environment will be improved to provide a more pleasant pedestrian 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. The range of retail uses will be supported and improved, to continue to provide a niche range of quality comparison goods shops to appeal to the residents and large number of visitors to the town.
2. Residents will continue to have access to a variety of community services and cultural facilities in the town centre, such as the Tivoli Theatre, Walford Mill, the Allendale Centre and the Library. These will be retained, supported and where possible enhanced to support the vitality of the town centre. The Allenvie area will be re-developed to provide a new civic hub and riverside park.
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 town centre will be enhanced; only high quality development proposals that respect and enhance the local character of the centre, and improve ease of movement and legibility will be permitted.
5. Higher density residential and commercial development will take place alongside the projected requirement for retail to provide for a balanced, mixed use environment.
6. In order to improve pedestrian safety, traffic movement and improve the ambience of the public realm, enhancements to the High Street will be introduced in a phased programme, subject to funding.
7. The townscape quality in and around Crown Mead will be improved, and the opportunity for redevelopment to improve links through the town will be promoted.
8. In order to improve the vitality of the town centre and improve pedestrian safety around the town, traffic management and calming measures will be considered to reduce pedestrian/vehicular conflict.
9. New development, shop fronts and advertisements in the town centre will be of the highest standard of design and in good quality materials, to reflect the architectural and historic significance of the town centre.
10. To minimise congestion and air pollution, the use of sustainable modes of transport will be supported with a transport hub created in the Town Centre to support this and pedestrian safety.

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 8.1 Wimborne Minster Town Centre

## Delivery and Monitoring

**8.26** The policy will be delivered by:

- The development management process.
- Cooperation between service providers, interested organisations, private interests and the local community.

**8.27** The policy will be monitored through:

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

## The Allendale Area

**8.28** This area provides a major opportunity to improve public service and community provision for Wimborne and East Dorset. The land was historically the civic centre for the Wimborne Urban District Council before local government reorganisation in 1974. It has remained in public ownership and provides a home for the Allendale Community Centre, Allendale House and public car parking close by, further public land is occupied by the Police and Fire Stations and the now closed Magistrate's Court.

**8.29** Changes in the delivery of public services mean that different users no longer expect to occupy their own premises, and wish to share facilities. The Allendale area provides an opportunity to achieve this. Additionally, the Community Centre is in need of replacement and this gives the opportunity to reorganise the land.

**8.30** In order to provide a Civic Hub in this area it will be necessary to take into account flood risks from the River Allen. The River corridor also offers the opportunity to provide an attractive wildlife and linear park. Additionally, an assessment of public parking needs is required to ensure that appropriate spaces are provided to serve the Town Centre.

### Policy WMC2

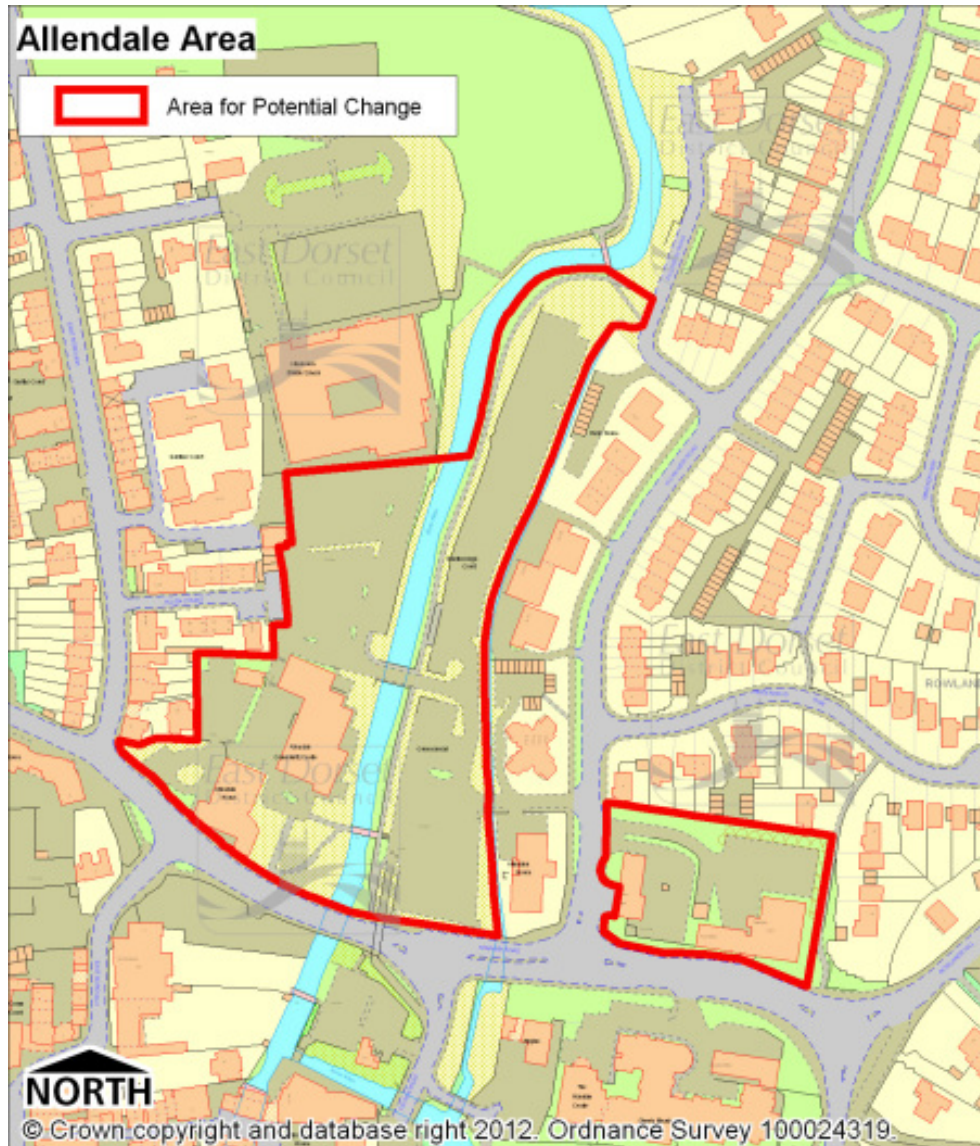
#### The Allendale Area of Potential Change, Wimborne

The area shown on the Proposals Map is identified as an area for potential change to enable the delivery of a civic hub to include:

1. A new Allendale Community Centre.
2. District Council Offices.
3. Offices for other public bodies.
4. A riverside park
5. Public car parking.

This is to be planned in an Area Brief which will provide a comprehensive overview of how to deliver the potential changes. To enable any change to take place the following information must be provided:

- A Flood Risk Assessment.
- A conservation assessment of the impact of development on the historic setting of Allendale House.
- A public car parking assessment for Wimborne Town Centre.
- An assessment of need for community facilities.



Map 8.2 The Allendale Area of Potential Change, Wimborne

### Delivery and Monitoring

**8.31** This policy will be delivered by:

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

**8.32** The policy will be monitored through:

- The Annual Monitoring Report.

### New Neighbourhoods

**8.33** The scale of facilities, services and employment opportunities associated with Wimborne and Colehill means that it is an appropriate location in which to consider the provision of additional housing, in the form of New Neighbourhoods. The Council has therefore undertaken a master planning exercise that looks at large areas of search to the north and west of Wimborne and the land between Wimborne and Colehill. The objective of this work has been to see if there is the opportunity to deliver New Neighbourhoods which can provide new housing and also improve the

provision of local facilities and services. The large majority of the area of search is considered inappropriate for development, but the exercise has concluded that a variety of areas to the north, west and east of Wimborne are able to accommodate New Neighbourhoods.

### **Cuthbury Allotments and St Margaret's Close New Neighbourhoods**

**8.34** These sites lie to the immediate west of Wimborne and offer the opportunity to provide homes within easy access of key services, facilities and work opportunities. They are important gateways to the historic town and, as such, development is expected to be of the highest design quality. The Cuthbury site provides the opportunity to relocate the Football Club and enable it to significantly improve the facilities it can offer. This will also allow the opportunity for Victoria Hospital to expand and improve its important services to the community.

#### **Relevant Evidence**

- The East Dorset New Neighbourhood Masterplan Reports.
- The Council's Open Space, Sport and Recreation Survey identifies a need for 8 hectares of active sports space to be provided across Wimborne and Colehill. Further needs for allotment provision are identified specifically for Colehill.

## **Policy WMC3**

### **Cuthbury Allotments and St Margaret's Close New Neighbourhoods, Wimborne**

Areas south of Julians Road, at Cuthbury allotments, at Wimborne Town Football Club and to the east of St Margaret's Hill are allocated to provide New Neighbourhoods including 260 homes, open space and 0.4 hectares of land for a future extension to Victoria Hospital. To enable this the Green Belt boundary will be amended to exclude the land identified for new housing and the hospital.

#### **Layout and Design**

- The layout and design of the schemes must be consistent with the principles set out in the Masterplan.
- A design code will be agreed by the Council, setting out the required high standards.
- Development must be sympathetic to the gateway location of the sites and their proximity to the Wimborne Minster Town Centre Conservation Area.

#### **Green Infrastructure**

- Land running alongside the river is to be set out as parkland, to provide an attractive informal recreation area.
- A Suitable Alternative Natural Greenspace strategy is to be implemented as part of the provision of the new housing as required by Policy ME3.
- New replacement allotments are to be provided in an easily accessible location within the Town or Colehill Parish. Land is identified to the south of Julians Road and as part of Policy WMC6 to meet the needs of the allotment holders.

#### **Transport and Access**

- The main access for the Cuthbury site is to be delivered from Julians Road with a secondary access from Cuthbury Gardens. Only pedestrian and cycling access is to be provided from Cowgrove Road.
- Access for the St Margaret's Hill site will come from St Margaret's Close.

- The Cuthbury development must contribute to delivering a traffic light controlled system to improve safety at Julian's Bridge.
- Improved pedestrian and cycle access must be provided across the River Stour to enable access to the wider countryside, the town centre and the settlements to the south.

### **Phasing**

- Prior to development of land occupied by the Football Club a new ground must be made available as identified in Policy WMC6.
- Suitable new allotments are to be made available before allotment holders have to vacate the existing site.





Map 8.3 Cuthbury Allotments and St Margaret's Close New Neighbourhoods, Wimborne

## Delivery and Monitoring

**8.35** This policy will be delivered by:

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

**8.36** The policy will be monitored through:

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

## Stone Lane Industrial Estate New Neighbourhood

**8.37** This is a small industrial estate which suffers from poor access, ageing buildings and uses that conflict with adjacent housing. The potential loss of employment land is considered acceptable as sufficient alternative space is identified elsewhere in the Core Strategy. These factors mean that the site is suitable for a New Neighbourhood. It offers the opportunity to provide housing in a well located position near to the town centre with its facilities, services and work opportunities.

**8.38** To enable development access to the site must be improved and strong landscaping provided to ensure that the built form does not harm the visual quality of the nearby Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty.

## Relevant Evidence

- The East Dorset New Neighbourhood Masterplan Reports.
- The East Dorset Employment Land Review and the SE Dorset Workspace Strategy Update (2012)

## Policy WMC4

### Stone Lane New Neighbourhood, Wimborne

The Stone Lane Industrial Estate is identified as suitable for redevelopment for housing with the opportunity to provide about 90 homes.

### Layout and Design

- The layout and design must be consistent with the principles set out in the Masterplan reports.
- A design code will be agreed by the Council, setting out the required standards.
- Development must be sympathetic to the gateway location of the site and its proximity to the Wimborne Minster Town Centre Conservation Area, as well as the Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty.

### Green Infrastructure

- A landscaped open space area is to be provided on the northern and western edges of the site to prevent visual harm impacting on the nearby Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty and to provide an attractive informal recreation area.
- A Suitable Alternative Natural Greenspace strategy is to be implemented as part of the provision of the new housing as required by Policy ME3.

## Transport and Access

- The existing access to the site on to Stone Lane must be improved to standards agreed by Dorset County Council.
- The development must enable a pedestrian and cycle access across the River Allen to link with the New Neighbourhood allocated in WMC5.



Map 8.4 Stone Lane New Neighbourhood, Wimborne

## Delivery and Monitoring

**8.39** This policy will be delivered by:

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

**8.40** The policy will be monitored through:

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

## Cranborne Road New Neighbourhood

**8.41** This New Neighbourhood provides the opportunity to locate homes in close proximity to the town centre with its wide range of facilities, services and employment opportunities. To provide further community support the New Neighbourhood includes shops and services to meet daily needs and a new first school.

**8.42** Care needs to be taken to ensure that the development sits sensitively in the landscape. A series of ridges run along the north and east of the site and it is important that development is contained within these. Additionally, a strong tree belt contains the land to the west. This should be further strengthened to ensure that there is no visual impact on the Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty to the west.

### Relevant Evidence

- The East Dorset New Neighbourhood Masterplan Reports.

## Policy WMC5

### Cranborne Road New Neighbourhood, Wimborne

Approximately 16.7 hectares is allocated to provide a New Neighbourhood to the east and west of Cranborne Road, north of Wimborne. This will include about 600 homes, a First School and a local centre, along with significant areas of greenspace. To enable this, the Green Belt boundary will be amended to exclude the land identified for new housing, the local centre and the school.

### 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 must be carefully planned to avoid a negative impact on the Burts Hill Conservation Area and the historic character of Wimborne Minster.
- The built form of the New Neighbourhood must not impact on the wider countryside. It will therefore be contained by the ridgelines to the north and east. To the west the strong tree line must be further strengthened to mitigate visual harm that development could cause to the Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty.
- A clear open gap must be maintained between the north of the development and buildings on Dogdean.

### Green Infrastructure

- The implementation of a generous green infrastructure strategy, along with a Suitable Alternative Natural Greenspace strategy, in accordance with Policy ME3, is a fundamental requirement. This is to ensure that the New Neighbourhood provides major informal recreational opportunities along with landscaping to ensure the scheme blends into the gentle and attractive landscape. Key features to be included include:
- Suitable Alternative Natural Greenspaces utilising the River Allen Valley and land to the north of the housing.
- A green corridor running east to west through the housing areas linking with the local centre and school and utilising the existing farm lane in the east.
- A park within the Burts Hill Conservation Area.
- Provision of allotments.

**Transport and access**

- Vehicular access is to be provided primarily from Cranborne Road with a single access coming from Burts Hill.
- Traffic management measures will be required along Cranborne Road to limit speeds to less than 30 mph. Additionally, further measures will need to be put in place to the east of the new Burts Hill junction to make this an unattractive route for those wishing to access the A31(T).
- Public transport routes are to be provided through the scheme.
- A network of dedicated pedestrian and cycling routes are to be provided throughout the scheme, including across the Allen Valley to link to Stone Lane and also towards the town centre.

**Drainage**

- A Sustainable Drainage Scheme must be agreed with the Council and Environment Agency with the aims of preventing flooding problems for neighbouring properties and on the River Allen as well as protecting and enhancing nature conservation quality.



Map 8.5 Cranborne Road New Neighbourhood, Wimborne

### 8.43 Delivery and Monitoring

8.44 This policy will be delivered by:

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

8.45 The policy will be monitored through:

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

## South of Leigh Road New Neighbourhood and Sports Village

8.46 This area offers the opportunity to provide high quality sporting, recreation and open space facilities alongside much need housing. It can also help to maintain the long term integrity of the Green Belt gap between Colehill and Wimborne. This can be achieved by keeping development to an area no further east than the existing housing on Leigh Road and protecting the gap as public open space

8.47 The land is flat with only a few small hedgerows and does not have any identified wildlife quality. There may be some archaeological importance associated with a Roman Road.

8.48 The New Neighbourhood is closely related to Wimborne. Although the Town Centre is beyond easy walking distance, it can be accessed by bicycle or via the regular bus services that travel along Leigh Road. To support the daily needs of residents it is proposed that a local centre is provided as part of the New Neighbourhood.

8.49 The sewage works lie to the south west of the land and it is important that the development takes into account the potential for smell nuisance.

### Relevant Evidence

- The East Dorset New Neighbourhood Masterplan Reports.
- The Council's Open Space, Sport and Recreation Survey identifies a shortfall in the provision of active sports pitches of about 8 hectares within Wimborne and Colehill.

## Policy WMC6

### South of Leigh Road New Neighbourhood and Sports Village, Wimborne

About 75 hectares of land is allocated for a New Neighbourhood to the south of Leigh Road, east of Wimborne Minster. This will include the following:

1. 350 new homes
2. A Sports Village with a new home for Wimborne Minster Football and Rugby Clubs, 8 hectares of other active sports pitches, with changing facilities and an area for teenage activity.
3. New allotments
4. A local centre providing for day to day needs
5. Land for a First School
6. About 37 hectares as a country park to the north and south of the A31(T)

**Green Belt**

- The Green Belt boundary is amended to remove the land required for the new housing. The boundary runs directly south from Brookside Manor and its amendment is not to narrow the sensitive gap between Wimborne Minster and Colehill/Little Canford. Additionally, the buildings associated with the Rugby and Football Clubs are removed from the Green Belt.

**Layout and Design**

- The New Neighbourhood will be set out according to the principles of the Masterplan reports.
- A design code is to 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.
- Suitable land is to be made available to enable the relocation of Wimborne Football and Rugby Clubs. This will include clubhouse facilities, pitches and associated car parking. Lighting of pitches is to be carefully designed to have the minimal possible impact on dark skies.

**Transport and Access**

- Vehicular access is to come from Leigh Road to the east of Brookside Manor. Emergency vehicular access only will be made available from Parmiter Drive. However, until the new access is provided from Leigh Road a temporary access will be allowed to enable the Football Club to relocate. Pedestrian and cycling access is to be provided throughout the New Neighbourhood, including the country park.
- Improvements for walking/cycling to link the development to the existing network towards the town centre and the Castleman Trailway.





Map 8.6 South of Leigh Road New Neighbourhood and Sports Village, Wimborne

## Delivery and Monitoring

**8.50** This policy will be delivered by:

- The development management process.
- The Architect's Panel will be used to inform decisions.
- Close working with the landowners, other authorities and service providers.
- The Community Infrastructure Levy will support the provision of open space.

**8.51** The policy will be monitored through:

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

## Leigh Park Playing Fields

**8.52** Wimborne Rugby Club occupies the recreation ground at Leigh Park. This area is supposed to provide open space for the Leigh Park community, but the presence of the Rugby Club diminishes its benefit. This is not ideal for either residents or the Rugby Club. The two pitches are heavily used for matches and training and are therefore often in poor condition despite the best efforts of the Club. Additionally, there are times when users of the Club have to park on the estate roads leading to conflict with residents. As a result the Club would like to relocate to gain an additional pitch and remove the conflict that currently exists with residents. The allocation of land to the south of Leigh Road for the Rugby Club relocation gives the opportunity to reconsider how to use the Leigh Park open space to benefit the local community.

**8.53** The most important aim in these circumstances is to significantly improve the quality of open space available for the residents. This could include the provision of a Multi Use Games Area for five a side football, basketball, netball and other games. Some allotments could be set out, along with a community garden and landscaping to make the area more attractive.

**8.54** There is also the opportunity to improve community facilities and provide some affordable housing for residents on the estate.

## Relevant Evidence

- The Council's Open Space, Sport and Recreation Survey identifies that Wimborne has an over provision of recreational space.

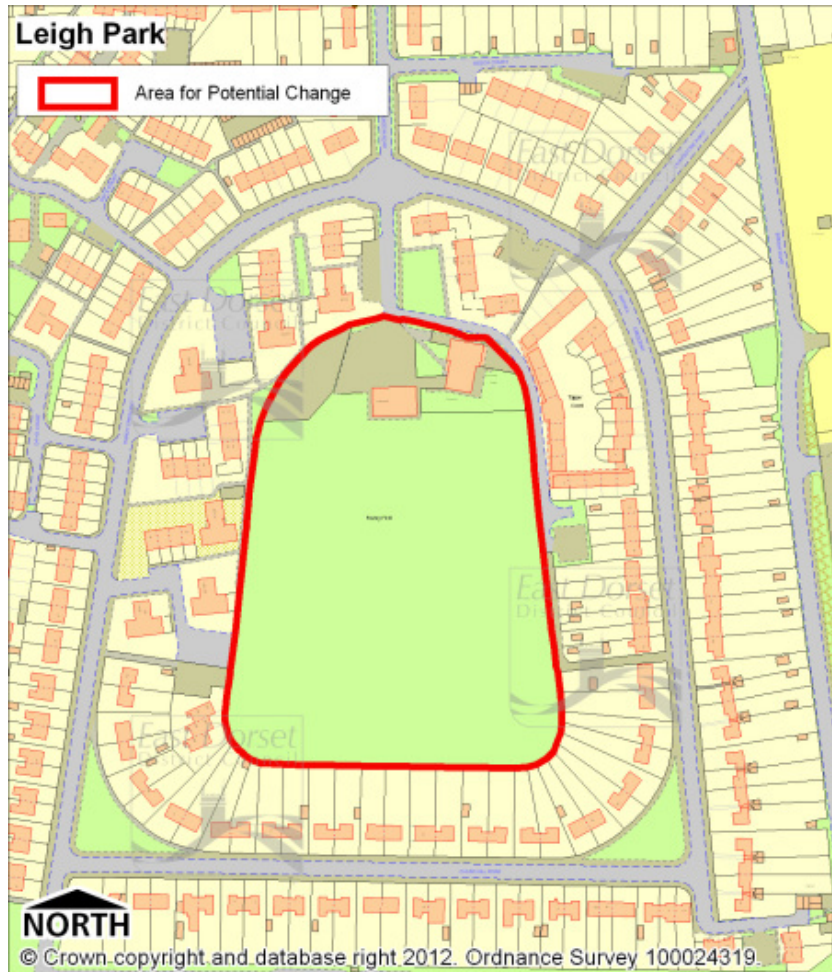
### Policy WMC7

#### Leigh Park Area of Potential Change, Wimborne

If Wimborne Rugby Club relocates to the area identified in Policy WMC6 their existing home should be used to benefit the Leigh Park Community. This is to include:

1. The retention of 1.5 hectares of land to be used as open space, within which a multi use games area is to be provided.
2. Youth club facilities.
3. Housing to provide for the needs of residents with local connections to Leigh Park.

An Area Brief is to be agreed with the Council to set out how best to achieve the greatest benefit for residents of Leigh Park.



Map 8.7 Leigh Park Area of Potential Change, Wimborne

## Delivery and Monitoring

**8.55** This policy will be delivered by:

- The development management process.
- The Architect's Panel will be used to inform decisions.
- Close working with the Town Council, local residents, Synergy Housing Association, other authorities and service providers.
- The Community Infrastructure Levy will support the provision of open space.

**8.56** The policy will be monitored through:

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

