



# A Local Plan for Bournemouth, Christchurch and Poole Issues and Options Consultation

January 2022



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# 1 Introduction

## A new Local Plan for our area

Bournemouth, Christchurch and Poole Council (BCP Council) was formed in April 2019, it is the tenth-largest urban local authority in England.

We need to prepare a Local Plan for Bournemouth, Christchurch and Poole which will set out a strategy for how much, where and what type of development will take place across the BCP area up to 2038. It will provide detailed planning policies and land allocations to guide change and new development, whilst taking account of climate change targets set by BCP Council and the government. Operating over the whole area gives us the opportunity to address key planning issues strategically.

## This issues and options consultation

This document is not the draft of the Local Plan. It is a consultation document that explains the key issues for the Local Plan and either recommends the approach we think we should take or sets out options to address the issue. Where we think there is only one reasonable thing to do, we make a recommendation and provide a reason why. Before we prepare a draft of the Local Plan, which will include detailed policy wording, we would like your views about our recommendations and options.

## How to get involved

Your views on this document will help shape the draft of the Local Plan for Bournemouth, Christchurch and Poole. To respond please visit: [haveyoursay.bcp council.gov.uk/localplan](http://haveyoursay.bcp council.gov.uk/localplan). Here you can view our interactive version of this document and access all the consultation materials.

**Please respond by March 25 2022**

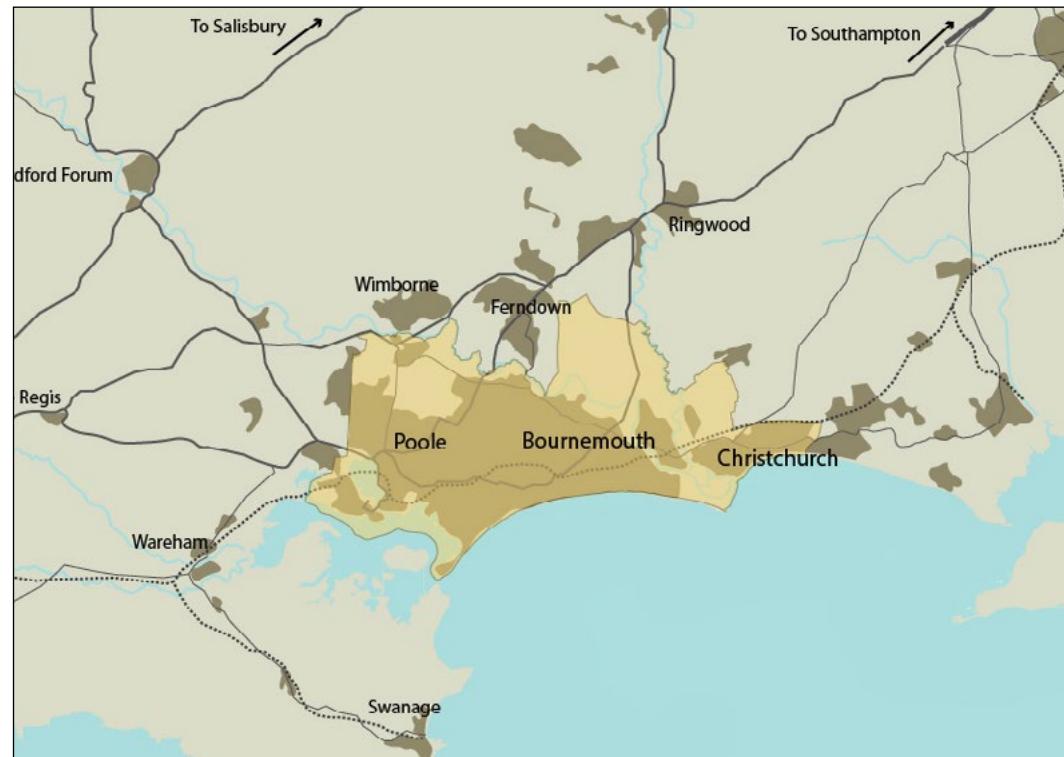


Figure 1 - The area of Bournemouth, Christchurch and Poole Council

If you are a landowner or developer who would like to suggest a site for development, please use our ongoing Call for Sites forms at [bcpcouncil.gov.uk/proposedsite](http://bcpcouncil.gov.uk/proposedsite). Sites already submitted do not need to be resubmitted but any up-to-date evidence on the deliverability of the site can be submitted.

## What we have done so far

We ran an initial public consultation on the key issues for the BCP Local Plan and a call for possible development sites in 2019. This information has been used to develop this issues and options document. A full report on the previous consultation is available at: [bcpcouncil.gov.uk/localplan](http://bcpcouncil.gov.uk/localplan). We have also been gathering a wide range of evidence on a variety of topics which can also be viewed at [bcpcouncil.gov.uk/localplan](http://bcpcouncil.gov.uk/localplan). Some of this is still to be completed and is explained in the relevant sections of this document.

## Existing planning documents

Once the new Local Plan is adopted, the current Local Plans that cover Bournemouth, Poole and Christchurch separately, will be superseded. Many of the existing policies and site allocations within these current documents remain relevant and we have reviewed these in preparing this issues and options consultation. Existing neighbourhood plans will remain in place

but will need to be reviewed to ensure conformity with the BCP Local Plan when it is adopted. Existing supplementary planning guidance documents will also remain in place unless they are superseded by updated versions linking to the BCP Local Plan.

## The Local Plan process

The preparation of the BCP Local Plan must follow a set process and the policies within it must be consistent with national planning rules. It must contribute to the government's climate change target to be net zero carbon by 2050, as well as being based on robust evidence. We also have to prepare a Sustainability Appraisal, and Habitat Regulation Assessment. These documents make sure the Local Plan considers relevant environmental, social, and economic issues and minimises any potential negative impacts. The progress on these documents and our evidence base can be found at [bcpcouncil.gov.uk/localplan](http://bcpcouncil.gov.uk/localplan).

While we are still gathering some of the evidence, we feel it is important to gather people's views at this stage before our strategy is finalised and detailed policies are written. This allows our communities to shape our approach. At the end of the process, an independent planning inspector examines the final version of the plan to check it has been positively prepared, is justified, effective and consistent with national planning policy.

2019	We are here	Winter 2022	Spring 2023	Autumn 2023	Early 2024
<b>Stage 1</b> <b>Evidence gathering</b> Initial consultation considering what issues should be addressed in the Local Plan	<b>Stage 2</b> <b>Issues and Options</b> This consultation which looks at different options to address the issues raised and the findings of evidence	<b>Stage 3</b> <b>Draft Plan</b> Consultation on draft policies and development locations	<b>Stage 4</b> <b>Plan submitted to the Secretary of State</b>	<b>Stage 5</b> <b>Examination</b> An independent planning inspector examines the plan, evidence and the comments made to test if it 'sound'	<b>Stage 6</b> <b>Adoption</b> The plan is adopted and used to inform decisions on planning applications

Figure 2 - Anticipated Local Plan timeline

## 2 About our area

### Population

- A current population of 395,000
- 68,100 <16 years old 17% local population
- 86,300 >65 years old 22% local population
- Over 85 languages spoken
- 17,184 on housing benefit, with 26,884 council tax support claimants



### Economy

- 61% of the population is of working age
- Unemployment rate of 4.5% compared to the national rate of 4.8% (Jan-Dec 2020)
- Median annual Full Time pay £29,200 to £29,300
- Contributed 10.3 billion to UK economy
- 2,095 new businesses 2019
- >15 million visitors annually spending £800 million



### Housing

- 176,600 households
- 64% houses, 35% flats
- 6,254 new homes built over last five years
- Homes cost more than 9 times average earnings



### Health and wellbeing

- 81% adults in good health
- over 60% overweight or obese
- 48% of early deaths preventable



### Sustainability and the environment

- Renewable energy increased to 126 MW in 2019
- emissions decreased by 36% since 2005
- 4.3% deaths attributed to air pollution (2019)



## 3 Vision and objectives

We have adopted the vision set out in the BCP Big Plan  
([bcp council.gov.uk/About-the-council/Our-Big-Plan/Our-Big-Plan.aspx](http://bcp council.gov.uk/About-the-council/Our-Big-Plan/Our-Big-Plan.aspx)):

**We aim for Bournemouth, Christchurch and Poole to be the UK's newest city region, brimming with prospects, positivity and pride.**

**It will be one of the best coastal places in the world where culture and heritage meet innovation and modernity, village meets town, country meets coast, creativity meets digital, businesses flourish and people thrive.**

As a network of vibrant and diverse communities, Bournemouth, Christchurch and Poole will be a place where people enjoy an outstanding quality of life in our unrivalled natural environment.

We want to harness the potential of our coastline of opportunity and make Bournemouth, Christchurch and Poole a place where people and businesses want to be because of the vibrancy of our communities, the strength of our economy, the skills of our people, the wealth of our culture and the quality of our infrastructure, our environment and quality of life.

The BCP Local Plan will play an important role in fulfilling the vision of the Big Plan and will help deliver changes across the whole area including the delivery of thousands of new homes and jobs creating wealth for our businesses and supporting the livelihoods for our families.

The main areas of growth will be focused within Bournemouth and Poole town centres, which will be the focus of commercial, leisure and cultural activity and will see the most intensive development, with taller buildings and the greatest numbers of new homes. The Bournemouth

International Centre will be enhanced as one of the best events venues in the world and the seafront will see significant investment.

Our vibrant communities across the urban area will also benefit from new homes where they are close to existing facilities and services, along with investment in physical and digital infrastructure.

We will also recognise and enhance the clean and green qualities of both our urban and natural environments. Enhancing our unrivalled natural environment and attractive historic places.



Following on from our vision, our proposed objectives are to:

- regenerate our **town centres** and network of **vibrant communities**
- provide a sufficient supply of **new market and affordable homes** to meet the different needs of our communities
- support **economic growth**, the creation of jobs and the offer to visitors
- adapt our **high streets and shopping** areas to cater for changing retail demands
- provide a **safe, sustainable and convenient transport network**, with a step change in active travel behaviour, ensuring the necessary transport infrastructure is in place to make it easy for everyone to get around
- conserve and enhance our **protected habitats and biodiversity**, and our network of **green infrastructure** and open spaces
- promote local character and the delivery of **high-quality urban design**
- improve **health and wellbeing** and contribute towards reducing inequalities
- work towards achieving **carbon neutrality** ahead of 2050 and inspire action to combat the climate and ecological emergency
- deliver the **infrastructure** needed to support development, local communities and businesses



## 4.1 Regenerating our town centres

### Objective: Regenerate our town centres and network of vibrant communities

Our town centres are at the heart of community life, they play a key role in attracting people to our area, supporting economic growth, inward investment and sustainable living.

We have three distinctive town centres with different characteristics, needs and opportunities.

- Bournemouth has a history as a vibrant seaside destination, it now offers significant opportunities for growth and can build on its economic strengths to become a thriving centre.
- Christchurch is a place rich in history, character and beauty which requires a balance of heritage-led regeneration and protection.
- Poole has a proud maritime, military and artisan history and has significant potential and opportunities for a programme of world class regeneration.

Our town centres are supported by a network of vibrant local community centres and high streets. These important local centres support people's day to day activities and offer a focal point for the social wellbeing of our communities.



Figure 3 - BCP town centres

## Issue: Regenerating our town centres

**Recommendation: We recognise that Bournemouth and Poole town centres have the most significant scope for regeneration and change. We propose that the vitality of each of these centres is supported through investment in visitor attractions, an increase in new homes and commercial development, with the encouragement of taller buildings in places, and through enhancements to streets and public spaces.**

**The scale of opportunity in Christchurch is more limited, but there is still scope for improvements to streets and spaces and the development of key sites around Stony Lane, subject to the resolution of flood risk issues.**

### Bournemouth town centre

Bournemouth town centre is famous as a Victorian seaside destination. The easy access to the seafront and outstanding sandy beaches, along with the pleasure gardens, have attracted people to the town for over 100 years. It is generally an attractive place with the qualities of a coastal garden town. Over the last ten years considerable progress has been made in delivering key projects from the Bournemouth Town Centre Vision. This has seen a number of new developments and investments in streets and spaces.

Like many town centres, changing shopping habits have led to some empty shops and reduced quality and variety of retail and visitor attractions. The spread-out nature of the main shopping streets has compounded these trends. Nevertheless, the accessibility of the coast, the attractive environment and transport connections offer significant opportunities for growth.

Our proposed strategy for Bournemouth could involve:

- increasing the number of people living in the town centre by making more sites available for new homes.
- making significant investments in the Bournemouth International Centre and the seafront to boost the quality of the visitor attractions available.
- making stronger connections between different parts of the town centre, and from the main shopping and leisure areas to the seafront.
- supporting the development of new hotel stock by allowing poor hotels to more easily exit the market.
- developing the Smart City concept ensuring high quality digital infrastructure is available across the town centre.
- positively encouraging taller buildings in some areas to enhance our iconic skyline.
- embracing community-led and cultural initiatives that support regeneration.

- supporting the diversification of shops, allowing a wider range of commercial activities, and the reuse of upper floors for alternative uses, such as new homes.
- continuing to focus on enhancing walking, cycling and public transport, enabling the amount of surface public car parks to be reviewed and potentially considered for other uses, such as new homes.
- enhancing the role of the Lansdowne as an area for employment and education.



## Poole town centre

Poole town centre has a rich maritime history, and its historic quay and old town are key attractions. The town centre also contains the areas only covered shopping in the Dolphin Centre and is home to the largest arts venue outside London, the Lighthouse Centre for the Arts.

Poole also has suffered from changing retail demands with relatively high proportions of empty shops. The centre contains some of the largest regeneration sites across the BCP area and the council hopes to act as a catalyst for regeneration by bringing forward development on the former power station site. The area north of the railway line also offers considerable scope for improvement.

Our proposed strategy for Poole town centre could involve:

- increasing the number of people living in the town centre by making a number of sites available for housing.
- redeveloping the former power station site and supporting the regeneration of adjacent sites to create a vibrant new urban neighbourhood.
- allowing some taller buildings in the regeneration area and the area north of the railway line.
- creating a better sense of arrival into the centre, supporting improvements at Poole bus station, Poole railway station and around the Kingland Road area.
- working with Network Rail to resolve the ongoing concerns about the High Street level crossing to see if it can be closed or made safer.
- considering reducing the size of the shopping area and create opportunities to introduce some residential uses into the High Street.
- better connecting the Lighthouse with the rest of the town centre by reconfiguring or closing Kingland Road.
- refurbishing or replacing the Dolphin Leisure Centre to provide a fit-for-purpose leisure centre.
- preserving or enhancing the heritage areas, with a focus on the Quay and Old Town, through the Heritage Action Zone project.
- delivering strategic flood risk defences to protect the town centre from future flood risk.
- embracing community-led and cultural initiatives that support regeneration.
- enhancing wayfinding/signage to help improve connections between the Quay and the rest of the town centre.



## Christchurch town centre

Christchurch town centre has an attractive environment, and the Priory, Castle and historic high street are significant visitor attractions.

Like Bournemouth and Poole, Christchurch has struggled to adapt to the changing retail environment however there are a range of independent shops and restaurants. The centre does not offer the range of opportunities as Bournemouth and Poole but there is still scope for improvement.

Our proposed strategy for Christchurch town centre could involve:

- encouraging the redevelopment of key sites around Stony Lane to deliver new homes, if flood risk issues can be overcome.
- supporting the redevelopment of the Lanes (south of the High Street) and Saxon Square with mixed use development.
- enhancing the pedestrian connections around the centre and across Fountain Roundabout.
- undertaking improvements to streets and public spaces.
- delivering strategic flood risk defences to protect the town from future flood risk.
- supporting improvements at Two Riversmeet Leisure Complex.
- embracing community-led and cultural initiatives that support regeneration.
- enhancing wayfinding/signage to help improve connections between the waterfront areas and the rest of the town centre.



## Issue: Vibrant local communities

**Recommendation: We propose to support local communities by retaining existing open spaces, shops, services, and facilities, wherever possible. We would also encourage new commercial, health, cultural, educational and leisure facilities, alongside investments in streets and open spaces, within walking distance of people's homes. This would help to reduce the need to travel, encourage walking and cycling, promote health and wellbeing, and support community cohesion.**

We want to ensure as many of our residents as possible are within safe walking distance of open spaces, shops, services and facilities. This would help to reduce the need to travel, encourage walking and cycling, promote health and wellbeing and support community cohesion.

While the location of facilities varies across the BCP area, most of our communities have access to such facilities near to their homes. We propose to ensure these facilities are retained and enhanced wherever possible.

There have been some changes to the planning system which give property owners permitted development rights to undertake some changes of use through a prior approval process without the need for full planning permission. This will limit what we can control but where possible we propose to introduce policies through the Local Plan that support our aspiration for vibrant local communities.

Our proposed strategy to support vibrant local communities could involve:

- maintaining access for residents to basic local services and facilities within walking distance of their homes wherever possible.
- supporting our network of district centres, local centres, high streets and neighbourhood shopping parades by retaining them as a focal point for commercial activities.
- providing new homes within, or close to, existing centres.
- ensuring communities have access to open space and recreation facilities.
- providing safe, easy and accessible walking and cycle routes to access shopping areas, schools, community facilities and open spaces.
- embracing community-led and cultural initiatives that support local communities.
- supporting local food growing opportunities.
- providing advice to local communities who wish to develop neighbourhood plans in their areas.
- a continued focus on the regeneration of Boscombe through the Towns Fund proposals.



## 4.2 New market and affordable homes

### Objective: Provide a sufficient supply of new market and affordable homes to meet the different needs of our communities

Providing new homes not only gives people a place to live but it supports our local economy creating construction jobs, supporting existing facilities and services so they remain open, making the area more attractive to local employers, and promoting additional spending in the local economy. New homes also provide financial contributions to improve and provide infrastructure such as open spaces and schools.

On average, we currently deliver around 1,300 homes a year across the BCP area, but we know there is a need for more homes to meet future demand, help to address housing affordability and to meet our aspirations for growth.

The government is committed to significantly boosting the supply of homes and requires us to set a housing requirement for our area. This will be set out in our draft of the Local Plan.

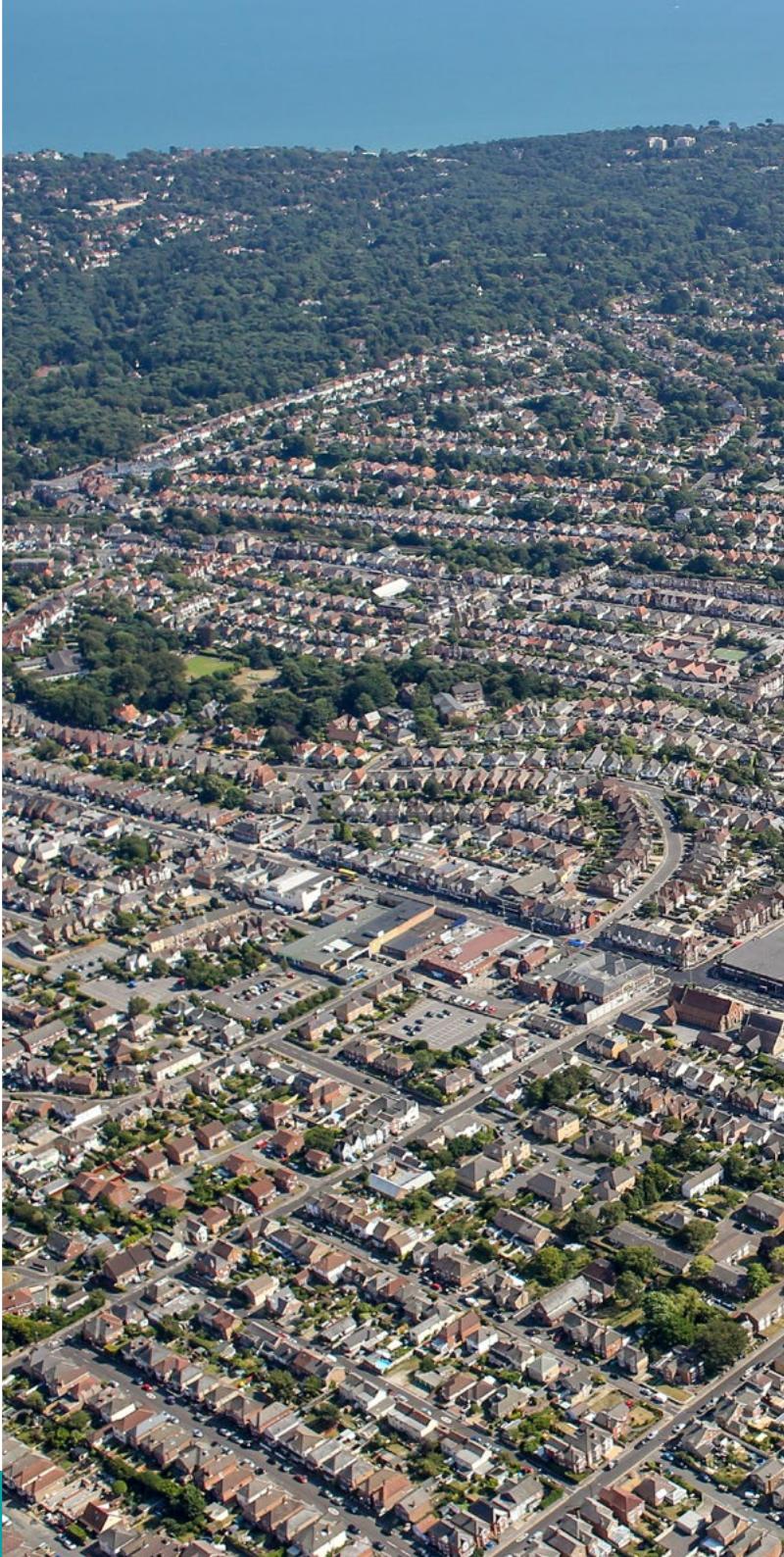
The government makes it clear that the starting point for setting our housing requirement is to calculate our housing need.

In most cases local authorities set a housing requirement that reflects housing need. However, the government acknowledges that there may be circumstances where the housing requirement differs, and some areas have exceptional circumstances or constraints to justify setting a lower housing requirement.

#### The government's standard housing method

The government expects us to follow a standard method to calculate housing need. The standard method uses a formula to identify the minimum number of homes we should plan for.

The government's standard methodology for calculating housing need generates a housing need figure for the BCP area of a minimum of **2,667 homes per year, or 42,672 homes to 2038**.





## A locally derived figure

There is scope within government policy and guidance to set a locally derived housing need figure when there are exceptional local circumstances which justify an alternative approach to the standard methodology, which also reflects current and future demographic trends and market signals.

The standard methodology uses the 2014 based subnational housing projections (SNHP). The 2014 projections are used to provide stability for planning authorities and communities, ensure historic under delivery and declining affordability are factored into the calculation, and to be consistent with the government's objective of significantly boosting the supply of homes. However, we have identified some concerns with the data used in 2014 housing projections relating to the BCP area specifically. We have explored this within a Housing Needs Sensitivity Report, which can be viewed at [bcp council.gov.uk/localplan](http://bcp council.gov.uk/localplan).

Since 2014 household projections were published, the Office for National Statistics has changed the way in which it estimates migration and population growth contained in its population estimates and projections. These were a key input into the 2014 SNHP.

The former authority of Bournemouth was one of the areas which experienced the largest downwards revision of population estimates. A reason for this was explained to be that the revised figure better captured the migration

patterns of international students in university towns. The more recent data shows that average net migration to the BCP area has fallen compared with the level projected in the 2014 population projections (SNPP) by an average of 1,849 people per annum in the period to 2020. Recent trends in net migration for England as a whole do not follow the same trend as for Bournemouth, Christchurch and Poole.

We are considering an alternative model that takes the 2014 projections as a base but applies migration adjustments that are considered realistic given the exceptional changes in migration trends in the BCP area. The model initially generates a minimum housing need of approximately **1,600 homes a year, or 25,600 homes to 2038**.

## Planning for a higher housing needs figure

The government guidance stresses that these figures provide a minimum starting point in determining the number of homes needed in an area, and that it might be appropriate to plan for a higher housing need figure in certain circumstances. This could include where there are funded growth strategies, planned strategic infrastructure improvements or where agreements are in place to take on unmet need from neighbouring authorities. Whilst we do not consider these circumstances currently exist, there is a significant affordable housing need across Bournemouth, Christchurch and Poole, and we will need to consider the consequences of these minimum housing need figures on affordable housing delivery. We will examine this as the Local Plan progresses.

## Issue: The number of homes we need

**We want to meet housing needs that support our aspirations as a thriving and vibrant urban area. We will need to take forward one of the following options:**

**Option 1: Try to meet the number of homes identified as needed through the government's standard housing method of a minimum of 2,667 homes a year, or 42,672 homes to 2038.**

**We would have to:**

- allow high density development and tall buildings across the built-up area.**
- potentially release large areas of Green Belt.**
- explore ways to allow more homes to be built in areas currently designated heritage conservation areas.**

**Option 2: Identify a lower locally derived housing need figure that deviates from the government's standard methodology but still reflects our aspirations for growth. Initial findings indicate this would be a minimum of 1,600 homes a year or 25,600 homes to 2038.**

**We would have to:**

- allow higher densities on currently allocated sites and allocate new housing sites within the built-up area.**
- allow high density development and tall buildings in suitable locations within the built-up area.**
- explore if some limited areas of Green Belt need to be released for the development of family homes and affordable homes.**

We have a limited amount of land available, especially in the built-up area, to meet the standard method housing need. Using this figure would require us to examine all possibilities for providing new homes. This would include looking at building at higher densities across the existing built-up area, considering ways more homes could be built in heritage conservation areas and examining if the Green Belt boundary should be reviewed to allow for urban extensions. It would also require a significant step change in housing delivery, doubling our current rate of delivery.

This approach follows government guidance, and the new homes would support local businesses and the economy, address issues with affordability and provide the opportunity for more people to have their own home.

A locally derived figure would still support local businesses and the economy, address issues with affordability and provide the opportunity for more people to have their own home. It would also allow us to focus a greater proportion of new homes within the existing urban area. This would follow the government's approach to maximise the use of brownfield sites and building in the existing built-up area locates new homes near to existing services and facilities. We would still need to allocate a range of sites for new homes but could direct higher density development and taller buildings into suitable locations, such as those which are nearest existing services and are the most accessible locations.

Due to the costs associated with developing brownfield land it can be challenging to deliver affordable homes or family sized homes in the built-up area. Therefore, some limited Green Belt release may still need to be considered as part of this approach.

If we wish to pursue a case for a lower housing need figure this would be scrutinised in detail when the Local Plan reaches the examination stage and is tested by a government inspector.

## Issue: Where new homes could be built

We have identified a number of possible sites in the built-up area that could provide new homes, and other sites within the Green Belt have been suggested to us. All these sites are shown at [haveyoursay.bcp council.gov.uk/localplan](http://haveyoursay.bcp council.gov.uk/localplan) and listed in Appendix 2. We could consider allocating any of these sites.

We have completed a Housing and Economic Land Availability Assessment which sets out what land is available and suitable for housing. In completing the assessment, we looked at a wide range of sites across the BCP area. The assessment can be viewed at [bcpcouncil.gov.uk/localplan](http://bcpcouncil.gov.uk/localplan) and an interactive map of the main sites considered is available at [bcpcouncil.gov.uk/localplanurban](http://bcpcouncil.gov.uk/localplanurban), an extract of the map is shown in Figure 4.

The assessment includes reviewing sites which were allocated in the Local Plans of the legacy authorities, identifying new sites which would be available and looking at existing planning permissions. It also factors in what is known as a 'windfall' assessment, this looks at the homes which get built on sites which have not been formally allocated or identified for development, typically because they are either too small to allocate or were not known to be available.

The assessment recognises that we have some significant constraints to the land we have available to build new homes, for example some land is in areas where we cannot develop due to impacts on protected habitats and other land is at risk from flooding.



Figure 4 - Existing sites with planning permission, rolled forward allocations and potential new allocations

The assessment shows there is land available to build approximately 34,000 homes in the built-up area. It includes 120 sites that could be suitable for new homes. We would welcome your views on these sites as part of the consultation process. To have your say you can complete our survey or drop pins to add comments directly onto the interactive map [here](#).

We have considered if any of these sites can be developed at higher densities either though increasing the number of flats, reviewing the mix of uses or by thinking about locations where taller buildings might be acceptable. Clicking on the sites in the interactive map highlights those sites which could be considered for higher density development. We will continue to explore opportunities for higher density development as the various sites are considered in detail for the draft plan.

Following the consultation process and further evidence gathering we will decide which of the sites become allocated for development in the draft of the Local Plan.

## The Green Belt

Green Belt is a specific planning designation. The fundamental aim of Green Belt policy is to prevent urban sprawl by keeping land permanently open; the essential characteristics of Green Belts are their openness and their permanence. The Green Belt performs the following purposes to:

- check the unrestricted sprawl of large built-up areas.
- prevent neighbouring towns merging into one another.

- assist in safeguarding the countryside from encroachment.
- preserve the setting and special character of historic towns.
- assist in urban regeneration, by encouraging the recycling of derelict and other urban land.

Government planning guidance explains that Green Belt boundaries can be altered through the preparation of Local Plans where exceptional circumstances exist and the alterations are fully evidenced and justified. While there is no definition of exceptional circumstances, in other local

authorities, it has been accepted that this can include the need for homes and ensuring family and affordable homes are delivered.

Alongside sites within the existing built-up area a number of sites in the Green Belt have been suggested to us by private landowners and site promoters. These are shown in the interactive map at [bcpcouncil.gov.uk/localplangreen](http://bcpcouncil.gov.uk/localplangreen), an extract of which is shown in Figure 5. They are also listed in appendix 2. We would welcome your views on these sites as part of the consultation process. To have your say you can complete our survey or drop

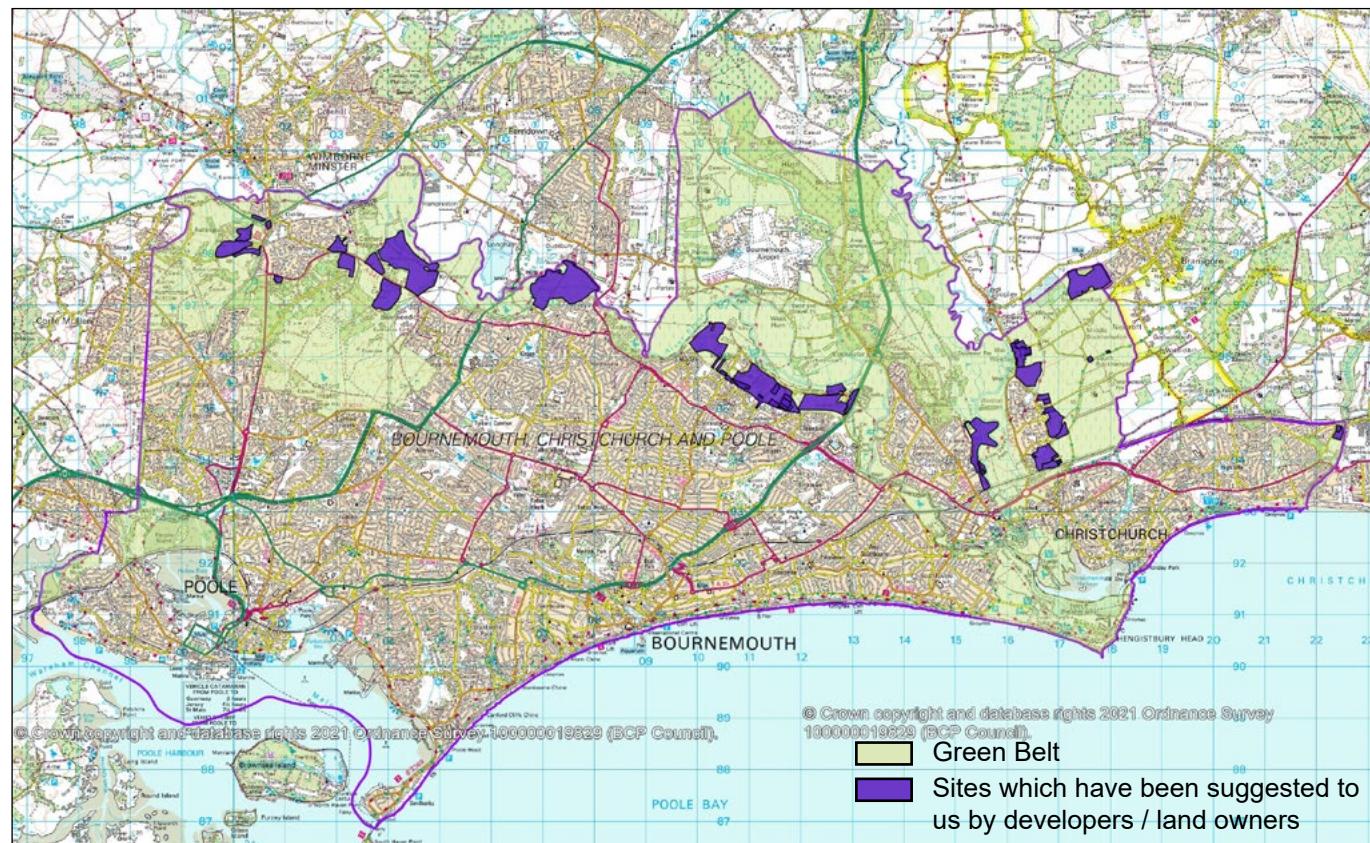


Figure 5 - Land suggested to us within the greenbelt for residential or mixed use development

pins to add comments directly onto the interactive map [here](#).

If all the promoted sites in the Green Belt were considered suitable then together, they would deliver approximately 4,000 homes. However, we have not come to any conclusions on the suitability of any of these sites and it is unlikely that all of the sites would be suitable or achievable.

We appreciate that considering the future of the Green Belt can be an emotive subject and there are common concerns about traffic movements, loss of green space and access to facilities. However, these sites can deliver more family homes and affordable homes than on most urban sites. There is also more space for facilities such as formal open space, schools and other community facilities. Contributions can also be collected to make improvements to existing infrastructure.

We have undertaken a Green Belt review to consider how well different parcels of land perform against the Green Belt purposes and an assessment of the potential harm to the Green Belt of releasing land for development. We also know that some of these sites are subject to other constraints or are located a long way from facilities and services which will impact on their suitability.

Before we come to any conclusions about the suitability of any of these sites, we are keen to hear your views as to whether any of these areas should be considered in more detail if required. As such we have not undertaken any further studies or assessments for example in relation to transport impacts at this stage.

## Summary of possible housing supply

Our potential sources of housing supply are summarised below. This may change as the plan progresses and more evidence is gathered. As a result of this consultation and further evidence gathering some of the sites identified at this stage may be proven to be undeliverable which would reduce the supply of possible sites. On the other hand, further sites may be submitted to us for consideration.

Potential sources of supply	
Sites in the existing built-up area	Up to 34,000
Increased densities on some sites in the existing built-up area	Up to 4,000
Review of heritage conservation areas	Up to 1,000
Possible Green Belt release	Up to 4,000
<b>Total possible supply</b>	<b>Up to 43,000</b>

This table shows that if all these possible sources of supply were realised then we would just have enough land available to meet the 2,667 homes a year or 42,672 homes to 2038 that results from the government's standard method. We would have enough land available to meet the lower, locally derived estimate of our housing need of a minimum of 1,600 homes a year or 25,600 homes to 2038.

## Duty to cooperate

If after all the options for meeting the housing need have been explored, we cannot meet our housing needs then we would need to establish how any unmet need might be met in adjoining areas by engaging with our neighbouring authorities.

We have a legal duty to engage constructively with neighbouring authorities on strategic issues that cross administrative boundaries. As such, we have been working with Dorset Council to discuss the housing needs across the wider area. It may be possible that Dorset could accommodate some of our unmet housing need.

Dorset Council has recently undertaken its own consultation on the Dorset Local Plan. This included a wide range of options on potential sites to deliver new homes. Dorset Council has its own housing needs to plan for and before Dorset Council can consider our unmet housing need, we must ensure all options to provide new homes within the BCP area have been fully considered.

## Issue: How to provide affordable housing

**Recommendation: To meet our demand for affordable housing, we will require a proportion of new homes on major sites to be affordable. This proportion may vary across the BCP area. We will set out the type or tenure of affordable housing and the circumstances where this should be provided on site, and where a payment towards affordable housing on major sites would be accepted.**

Affordable homes are homes that are for sale or rent that are provided for eligible households who cannot afford to buy or rent in the area. There are several different types of affordable housing such as shared ownership and social rent. The government has also introduced a new affordable housing product called First Homes.

There is a significant need for affordable homes across the BCP area and we need to maximise the amount of affordable housing provided. We are preparing a Housing Needs Assessment to examine the different sizes and types of affordable homes needed. The government has set out that 25% of affordable homes provided should be First Homes, which are offered at a discounted sales price. We will use our evidence on affordable housing need to work out what type of affordable housing should be provided alongside First Homes.

In line with government requirements, the Local Plan will set out the proportion of new homes on sites of 10 or more homes that should be affordable, and the type of affordable homes required. Due to differences in land values, the percentage of affordable homes required on major sites is likely to be different across different parts of the BCP area and we are undertaking a viability study to ensure the percentage and tenure of affordable housing we ask for will be viable. The government do not require that small sites of less than 10 homes provide affordable housing.

We can also consider the circumstances where a financial contribution could be made instead of providing affordable housing on a site. We could explore setting out a payment structure by use of a section 106 agreement (see section 4.10 for more information) for affordable housing that would give more certainty to developers about what is required and help to boost the supply of affordable housing. The council will also continue to deliver its own stock of affordable homes on suitable sites in its ownership.



## Issue: Providing custom self-build housing plots

**Recommendation: To make plots available for self-build housing we could require a proportion of plots on large, strategic housing sites to provide an area of self-build.**

The government expects us to give planning permission for enough plots of land to meet the demand for custom self-build housing. This is to allow more people to build their own home and support small builders. The demand for custom self-build in the area is assessed by our custom build register. On average, 55 people apply to the self-build register per year, indicating a continued demand for self-build.

Our Housing Needs Assessment suggests the best way of securing plots for self-build is through requiring a proportion of plots to be set aside for self-build on larger, strategic sites. This would allow some plots to be delivered, although developers are likely to be concerned about viability and will require the option to develop the plots themselves if they are not sold to self-builders.

## Issue: Providing the right mix and type of homes

**Recommendation: A mix of all housing types and sizes are needed across Bournemouth, Christchurch and Poole. In order to provide flexibility, we would not propose to prescribe a set housing mix, apart from on large, strategic development sites over 40 homes.**

Providing a mix of housing types and sizes helps to create inclusive and vibrant neighbourhoods. We are working on evidence through the Housing Needs Assessment about the type and mix of homes that are needed across the BCP area. This initially shows that a mix of all housing types and sizes are needed and the greatest need for market homes with 2 and 3 bedrooms and affordable homes of 1 and 2 bedrooms.

It is not suggested that a prescriptive mix is set out for every site within the Local Plan, each site is different and depending on its size and location each site will lend itself to a different solution. Developers will however be encouraged to provide a mix of units on sites where feasible, and we will monitor the delivery of house types to ensure overall provision meets the identified need. It is however proposed that a housing mix is set out on larger, strategic development sites over 40 homes including in the urban area.





## Issue: Providing homes for older people and those with disabilities

**Recommendation: All homes should meet Part M4(1) of the building regulations to be accessible. Given there is a high and growing proportion of older people, and a significant proportion of people with a long-term health problem or disability in our area, we propose also that all homes should meet the M4(2) higher accessibility standards to provide homes to meet changing needs over time, and 10% of homes should achieve the M4(3) standard of being wheelchair accessible, subject to viability testing.**

Offering older and disabled people a choice of suitable accommodation to suit their needs can help them live independently for longer, feel more connected to their communities and help reduce social care and health costs. Homes to meet the needs of older and disabled people can range from adaptable general housing to specialist homes with high levels of support.

There are a high and growing proportion of older people and a significant proportion of people with a long-term health problem or disability in the BCP area. To meet the needs of older and disabled people we need to provide specialist housing and more accessible homes. Different types of specialist housing can include:

- age restricted general market housing
- retirement living or sheltered housing
- extra care housing or housing with care

As a starting point, we need to require that all homes should meet the building regulation M4(2) standards and that a proportion of homes should also meet the higher M4(3) standard of being wheelchair accessible. This will need to be considered as part of a viability assessment of all our suggested policies in the Local Plan.

Given the increased need, we may also need to allocate some sites specifically for specialist accommodation for older people and those with disabilities (both market and affordable). This would be logical where landowners are keen to develop specialist accommodation or the constraints affecting the site limit other land uses.

In addition to the specialist housing, additional care homes or nursing home provision may also be required. The council has however, recently adopted a new strategy which is aimed at providing further support to enable people to remain at home for longer. The requirements for more accessible housing standards and increased delivery of specialist housing will help to meet this strategy and reduce the need for care home and nursing home provision.

## Issue: Student accommodation

**Recommendation: We propose to direct purpose-built student accommodation into town centre locations and on campus sites. We also propose to restrict the concentration of Houses in Multiple Occupation (HMOs).**

In areas such as Bournemouth, where there is a relatively large student population, the government sets out that Local Plans should plan for sufficient student accommodation.

The pandemic has impacted the higher education sector, but the long-term demand is still likely to remain strong. However, the higher education providers are only considering modest, if any, growth.

We propose to encourage any dedicated student accommodation to on-campus or town centre locations. We also recognise that concentrations of student HMOs can impact the amenities of local residents. While homeowners normally have permitted development rights to change the use of their property to HMOs without needing planning permission, we can use planning powers called Article 4 directions which can remove these rights. As such, we propose to continue with the Article 4 directions in Talbot Village, and across Bournemouth, which require changes of use from a house to HMOs to require planning permission. Where permission is sought, we propose to limit the concentrations of HMO properties in an area.

## Issue: Pitches for gypsies, travellers and travelling showpeople

**If there is an identified need for permanent residential and/or transit pitches for gypsies, travellers and travelling showpeople we will have to think about how it can be met by one or a combination of the following options:**

**Option 1: Consider allocating site(s) within the urban area.**

**Option 2: Consider if exceptional circumstances justify allocating site(s) within the Green Belt.**

**Option 3: Rather than allocating sites, include a criteria-based policy against which to assess planning applications for permanent and/or transit sites.**

**Option 4: Requiring pitches to be provided as part of larger, strategic sites.**

**Option 5: Rather than allocating a transit site, consider alternative management approaches such as, providing unauthorised encampments with water, waste disposal and toilets.**

The government's Planning Policy for Traveller Sites requires us to set pitch targets which address the likely permanent residential and transit site accommodation needs of Gypsies and Travellers and Traveling Showpeople in their area. There is a requirement to identify permanent residential sites measured against locally set targets. Transit sites can be identified, or provision is made by alternative management approaches. Certain groups of gypsies and travellers may be able to demonstrate a right to culturally appropriate accommodation under the Equality Act 2010. The final approach adopted in the Local Plan should provide certainty for travellers, for the resident population and help to manage unauthorised encampments.

We are currently working on evidence that will set out how many permanent residential pitches and transit pitches might be needed in our area. Initial findings are expected in the coming months and will inform the next stage of the Local Plan process. We know that identifying land for pitches will be a significant challenge as it relies on landowners being willing to release land for pitches which, compared to general housing, has a much lower land value.

Criteria based policies could be used to determine planning applications for traveller sites. Larger, strategic sites could provide an area for traveller pitches and this maybe more viable as part of a large site, it may however impact on the delivery of these sites.

## 4.3 A prosperous economy

### Objective: Support economic growth, the creation of new jobs and the offer to visitors

Our area is home to over 15,000 businesses and in 2019 there were 193,000 people employed in the area. A high proportion of jobs are within the finance, engineering and manufacturing, and health and social care sectors.

The government expects us to set out a clear economic strategy for the BCP area, which encourages sustainable economic growth. We have prepared an Economic Strategy which aims to create an inclusive and vibrant economy. The draft strategy has a strong relationship with the Dorset Local Industrial Strategy and Dorset Council's Economic Strategy.

The draft Economic Strategy for Bournemouth, Christchurch and Poole has six key themes:

- Economic recovery - responding to the Covid-19 pandemic and supporting new ways of working
- Flourishing people and communities - boosting wage potential and developing skills



- Productive businesses - supporting business growth, inward investment and knowledge-based businesses
- Globally, nationally and locally connected - infrastructure investment and digital coverage
- Creating a vibrant city region - digital and cultural led transformation
- Looking to the future - supporting the Smart Place programme with the use of digital and mobile technologies

The Local Plan will help to support the delivery of our economic strategy. It will identify strategic employment sites for local and inward investment to match the strategy and to meet employment needs over the plan period.

In terms of anticipated growth, forecasts were produced in Summer 2020. The forecasts estimated that between 2018-2038, 11,000 jobs would be generated in the BCP area which equates to a growth of around 5%. More recently, national forecasts are now suggesting a more positive outlook with a significant bounce-back in the short-term. We are currently reviewing our employment evidence which will provide further detail about the level of growth and the future of employment land provision across the BCP area and parts of Dorset. It will help to determine the amount and type of employment land that is needed, and the different sectors of the economy which are expected to grow.

### Issue: Bringing forward strategic employment sites

**Recommendation:** We propose to continue to allocate Bournemouth Airport; Poole Port; Talbot Village; Wessex Fields; and Lansdowne as the key strategic employment sites.

To meet employment needs we will need to allocate strategic sites for employment. These strategic sites have been identified in previous Local Plans and include Bournemouth Airport, the Port of Poole, Talbot Village, Wessex Fields and Lansdowne. These are shown in Figure 6 and on the interactive map at [bcpcouncil.gov.uk/localplanstrategic](http://bcpcouncil.gov.uk/localplanstrategic). We would welcome your views on these sites as part of the consultation process. To have your say you can complete our survey or drop pins to add comments directly onto the interactive map [here](#).

### Bournemouth Airport & Business Park

Bournemouth Airport and the business park is a strategic employment site which has the potential to attract major new investment and employment opportunities.

The operational airport includes the passenger terminal, car parks and administrative offices. Annual passenger numbers in 2019 were 803,127 although these numbers have obviously been impacted by travel restrictions brought in around the Covid-19 pandemic.

The business parks are located North West and North East of the operational airport and have approximately 50 hectares of employment land remaining for development. This supply is critical for meeting our employment land requirements in the future.

The airport, and business park, have a number of important constraints which affects development, including:

- the proximity of sensitive environmental habitats and European designated sites.
- the delivery of key transport infrastructure improvements/enhancement of public transport services and facilities for cyclists.
- the impact upon the settlements of Hurn and West Parley, including the Hurn Conservation Area.
- risk of flooding and any necessary flood defences.

A Public Safety Zone and Aerodrome Safeguarding Zone (as defined by the Civil Aviation Authority) are in place around the airport. As such certain types of development, for example schemes for tall buildings, require consultation with the airport operator.

Currently planning policies set out the boundaries of the business park and three zones for different

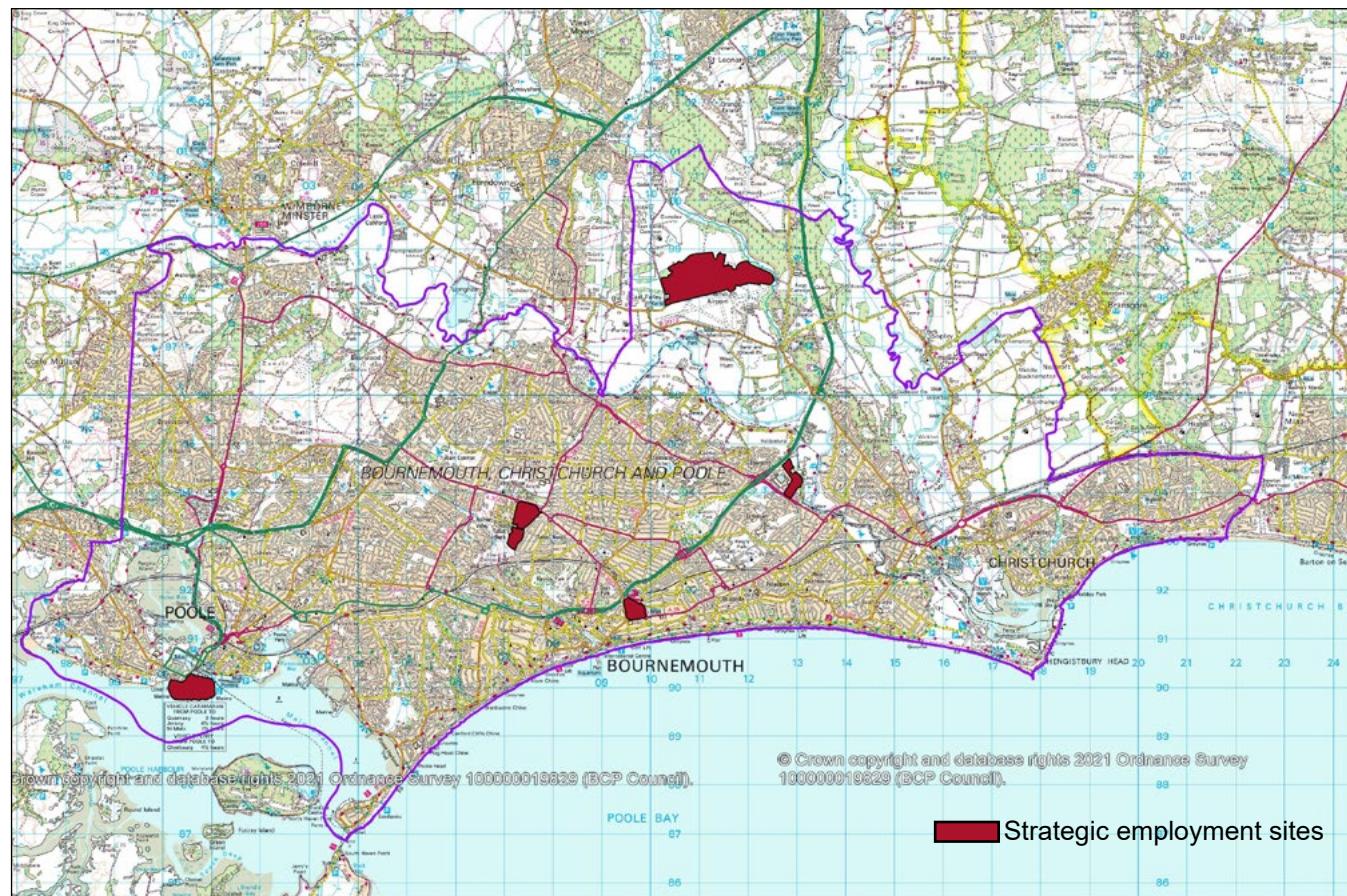


Figure 6 - Strategic employment sites

types of development within the operational airport, see Figure 7. The policies set out that uses in the business park should be primarily employment uses, while those in the operational airport area should primarily be for uses to support the function of the airport. Zone A is restricted to uses that would retain the open aspect of the area. Zone B is restricted to uses that support the operational airport (e.g. administrative accommodation for airlines/tour operators and public transport facilities). Zone C is specified to remain undeveloped other than development permitted by the airport's operating license or that which is essential to the future operation and amenity of the airport. We propose to continue this approach in the Local Plan.

## Pool Port

Pool Port is a vital economic asset to the area, directly and indirectly supports many thousands of jobs within Pool, Dorset and the South West.

It is a key location for economic growth. Significant recent investment in highways infrastructure improvements have enhanced the port's accessibility. With a dedicated rail link, there is also potential to increase rail freight handling.

Pool Harbour Commissioners own the port and have produced a masterplan that sets out proposals for the port's development over the next 25-30 years. A crucial part of this strategy was the creation of the south-facing deep-water quay which enables larger ships to visit the port. The masterplan also identifies the importance of diversifying into other commercial sectors such as, marine-related industry and leisure uses, for

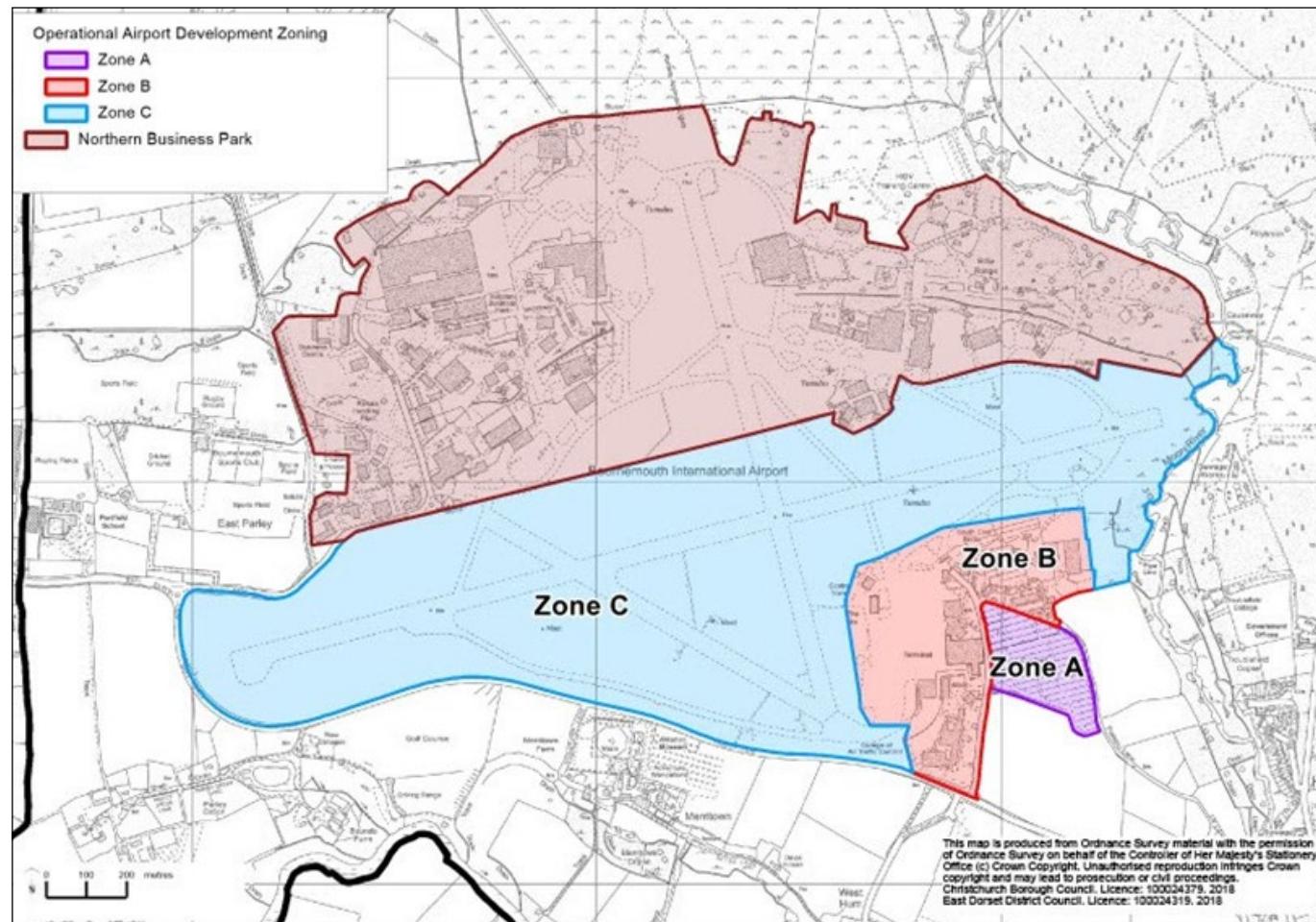


Figure 7 - Bournemouth airport development zones

example: berths for leisure craft, marine visitor facilities and events.

Although the port is in a relatively less sensitive part of Poole Harbour in ecological terms, it is still vital that development proposals do not have an adverse impact upon European and internationally protected sites. To adapt to climate change, new development in the port will also need to incorporate necessary measures to address flood risk and explore options for reducing carbon emissions.

We plan to continue to support the growth of Poole Port by allowing port-related activities, marine related industrial uses, and other employment uses or marine leisure uses that would be compatible with the function of the port to take place. We would also aim to ensure that the use of rail link for freight handling is not impacted by any proposals.

## Talbot Village

Bournemouth University and Arts University Bournemouth, located in the Talbot Village area, perform a vital role to the economy of the wider south east Dorset area. The universities wish to continue investing in their academic buildings and facilities. The area also offers the opportunity to support economic growth linked to the creative industries and digital technology sectors in which the universities excel.

Whilst supporting the universities is important from an economic and social perspective, the area is close to Talbot Heath, a European and internationally important habitat site. Any growth at the universities will therefore need to be carefully managed from an environmental perspective to

ensure there are no adverse impacts on protected habitats. Talbot Village is also close to residential areas and any development will need to be sensitively designed in terms of siting and scale to ensure that existing neighbouring residential amenity is respected.

The areas for the different uses are shown in Figure 8 below. We plan to continue to support the growth of the universities by supporting the creation of around 33,000 sqm of additional academic floor space and 450 student bed spaces in area TV1. A new innovation quarter delivering up to 25,000 sqm of office uses, health care facilities and other university-related uses in area TV2 (including supporting uses such as a coffee shop, and some residential development). These uses would be alongside a heathland support area in area TV3. This reflects the approach in our current planning policies.

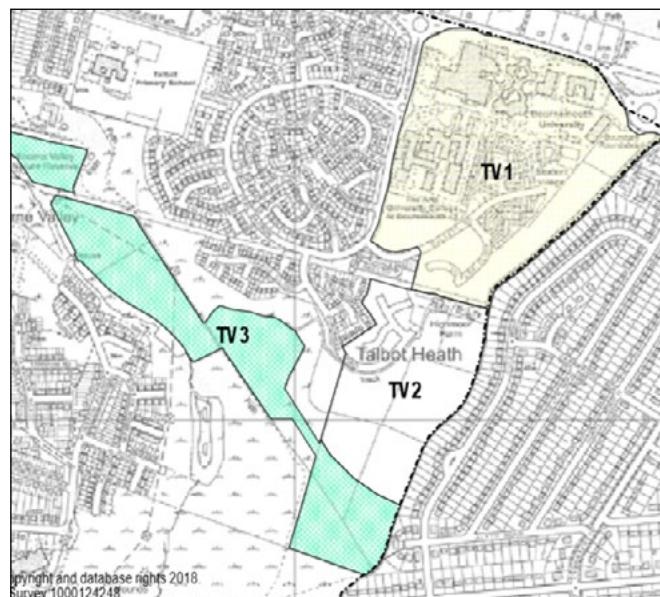


Figure 8 - Talbot village development zones

There may be some scope to increase the floorspace in the innovation quarter, but any impact on the sensitive habitats and the road network would need to be explored. We could also consider merging TV1 and TV2 together to allow more integration between the universities and innovation quarter.

Any new residential development proposed in this area is currently required to reflect the density of adjacent residential areas. To help meet our challenging housing requirements we could alter this with a requirement to reflect the scale of adjacent residential areas. This change would provide more flexibility whilst continuing to protect neighbouring resident amenities.

## Wessex Fields Business Park

The Wessex Fields Business Park, situated off Castle Lane East, has been an important employment area since its original allocation in the 1980s. The area includes a range of offices, Royal Bournemouth Hospital, law courts and a hotel.

There is a large undeveloped area of land next to the hospital. This land is now owned by BCP Council and we are exploring what mix of uses should go on the site. It is envisaged that this area provides the opportunity to create a cluster of medical technology businesses, along with other employment and health uses, and some key worker housing.

Wessex Fields can currently be accessed from Castle Lane East which is one of the most congested roads in Bournemouth. Planning consent has been given for a new junction off the

A338. Works have started which will give access to our land and the adjacent sewage works and there is ongoing work looking at improving walking, cycling and public transport access.

We consider that Wessex Fields should continue to be a location for a broad range of employment uses. Allowing a wider range of uses on the site potentially including an element of key worker housing associated with the hospital could be the catalyst to bring this site forward.

### Lansdowne

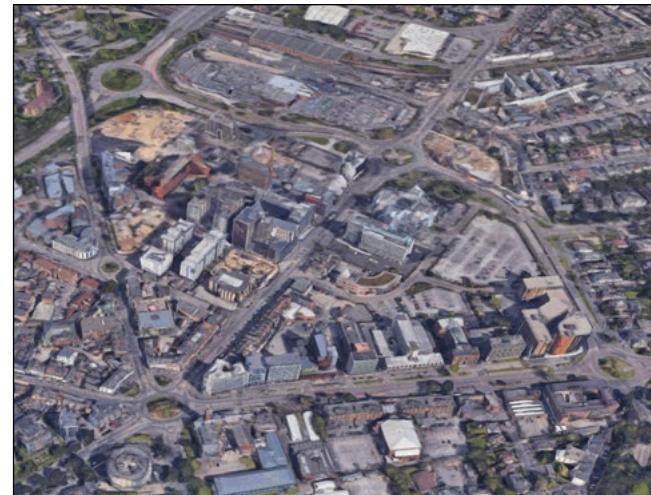
The Lansdowne area in Bournemouth town centre is one of the conurbation's main business and employment districts, accommodating high density office space. The area is well located near Bournemouth Travel Interchange giving access to rail bus and coach travel options as well as having easy access to the A338.

In recent years there has been an increased pressure for education uses, residential and student accommodation in the area. In a legacy Local Plan we have identified the area to deliver primarily office space, however evidence submitted to accompany planning applications and in support of planning appeals demonstrates that large, office schemes are unlikely to be viable. This trend is likely to be exacerbated by changing work patterns, such as increased home working and a possible future need for flexible office space, that has been accelerated by the Covid-19 pandemic.

We remain committed to the future of Lansdowne as an important employment and education location through initiatives such as the Lansdowne Delivery Plan (2015) which includes

improvements to street spaces, such as that emerging in Holdenhurst Road. Character, location and connectivity allow for a scale and type of development that is unlikely to be acceptable elsewhere in the BCP area. It therefore has unique potential for high density mixed-use development.

However, it is likely that local planning policy for the Lansdowne area will need to change emphasis for it to have a future as a thriving employment area. On this basis, we could introduce a more flexible approach that would support a wider range of employment and residential uses, rather than focussing mainly on offices. Further, up-to-date employment evidence will be produced to support the new Local Plan, enabling an understanding of future office needs.



## Issue: Protecting existing employment areas

Existing employment areas support various local businesses. We have various options on how we manage these areas in the future, we could explore one of these options:

**Option 1. Continue to protect all existing employment areas for employment related use only (offices, research and development, and light industrial, general industrial and warehousing).**

**Option 2: Be more flexible and allow a wider range of uses in employment areas, including housing.**

**Option 3: Identify specific employment areas that can be re-developed for housing.**

There are many existing employment areas across Bournemouth, Christchurch and Poole which provide for a wide range of employment in various businesses and commercial activities. These areas contain industrial units, warehouses, and office uses.

Protecting employment land would ensure that there is sufficient land to meet employment needs and growth. We are working on a new Workspace Strategy which will give us a better understanding of our employment land needs. There may be scope to redevelop some or parts of employment areas for other uses, such as housing. This would

reduce employment floorspace. It could also cause issues for existing uses in employment areas which may not be compatible with residential uses. However, it could help to meet our challenging housing needs.

We are reviewing our existing employment sites across the BCP area. The existing areas of employment are shown on the interactive map at [bcpcouncil.gov.uk/localplanemployment](http://bcpcouncil.gov.uk/localplanemployment), an extract of which is shown in Figure 9. We would welcome your views on these sites as part of the consultation process. To have your say you can complete our survey or drop pins to add comments directly onto the interactive map [here](#).

### Implications of government changes to use classes and permitted development

The Use Classes Order and Permitted Development Order allow some developments to take place without planning permission. The government has made significant changes to these orders in 2020 and August 2021. The changes will likely have some impact upon existing employment floorspace. Offices were previously given a use class known as B1; however, offices now fall within a new use class called Class E which covers all commercial, business and service uses. This gives office uses more flexibility to change to any other uses classified under Class E without planning permission, including shops and cafés.

In August 2021, the government introduced more changes which will allow premises within Class E to be changed to residential under permitted development rights through a prior approval procedure rather than needing to gain planning



Figure 9 - Existing employment areas

permission. This could result in existing offices and industrial premises being lost through conversion to residential use.

There are some limitations and criteria for prior approvals. It only affects premises under 1,500 sqm floorspace and we can only consider:

- impacts on transportation.
- contamination risks.
- the impact of noise from commercial premises on future occupiers.
- the provision of natural light.
- the impact upon future occupiers in areas which are used for general or heavy industrial waste management, storage and distribution, or a mix of uses.

Having regard to these considerations, residential use is likely to be inappropriate within a vast majority of employment areas. To provide clarity and protection for the continued operation of existing employment premises, we could identify those employment areas where there is likely to be conflict.

New sites and re-development of sites will still need planning permission and it is important to continue safeguarding premises within the BCP area. Existing employment areas will be safeguarded for uses which generate employment, and which are appropriate to the location.

## Issue: Isolated employment sites

**Employment sites, which are not part of a wider employment area, still contribute to our supply of employment land. We have various options for how we manage these areas in the future, we could explore one of these options:**

**Option 1: Continue to protect isolated employment sites for employment uses, requiring the site to be marketed for employment uses before allowing any change of use to occur, and exploring other uses that generate employment or health/care related development in the first instance.**

**Option 2: Continue to protect isolated employment sites for employment uses, requiring the site to be marketed for employment uses before allowing any change of use to occur.**

**Option 3: No longer protect isolated employment sites for employment and encourage re-development.**

There are a number of employment sites in locations which lie outside of protected employment areas. These are regarded as isolated employment sites, and some may not be particularly well-suited to continued employment use. Redeveloping these sites for other uses could offer an opportunity to help meet other development needs, such as care homes or housing and improve the amenities of neighbouring residents.

However, these sites do form part of our employment land supply and it may be appropriate to consider the viability of isolated employment sites for continued employment use. Where a site is no longer appropriate for employment uses on grounds of viability, local character, impact of the employment use on amenity or location, a policy approach could consider applying a priority hierarchy of alternative uses including health or

care-related uses; other uses which generate employment; or other forms of housing.

Offices could also be considered as isolated employment sites where they lie outside of protected employment area or town centres. However, offices now fall under Use Class E and can flexibly change to other uses within Class E without the need for a formal planning permission including residential.

## Issue: Visitor accommodation

**Recommendation: We propose to prioritise central Bournemouth as a location for new hotel development. We would seek to focus new hotel development in this area.**

**In relation to existing hotels, we could consider one of the following options:**

**Option 1: Resist the loss of hotels in specific zones within Bournemouth town centre and potentially within Christchurch and Poole town centres.**

**Option 2: Resist the loss of hotels but support enabling residential development alongside hotel redevelopment.**

**Option 3: Consider a more market driven approach that is more flexible to the loss of hotels.**

Visitors to the BCP area are crucial to the local economy, bringing spend into the area and providing employment. The Local Plan will need to consider how to maintain a sufficient range and supply of visitor accommodation to help sustain a competitive visitor economy into the future. Economic investment plans such as Lansdowne, Poole Town Centre, Boscombe Towns Fund, Seafront Strategy will fuel demand for new hotel stock. Government policy indicates that visitor accommodation and facilities are “main town centre uses” and should therefore be directed into defined centres.

We are currently gathering evidence on hotel and visitor accommodation which will inform future policy on new hotel developments and retention of existing hotel stock. The work is at an early stage and the issues need to be examined and discussed further before policy approaches on visitor accommodation are consulted upon. The options above give a broad indication of the type of issues

that could be considered in future workshops and consultations.

Prioritising central Bournemouth would give a clear direction to the market regarding our priorities. We could consider designated core hotel frontages along parts of Bournemouth town centre where existing hotels would be protected, and new hotels would be encouraged. This would provide a focus for new development and encourage hotel development. While there are fewer hotels within Poole and Christchurch town centres, we could consider areas where existing hotels within these centres are also protected. Alternatively, we could allow hotels to redevelop alongside the provision of residential uses or give consideration to a more flexible approach to assist in the exit of poorer quality hotel stock which does not have a realistic future.



## Issue: Visitor attractions

**Some sites have been suggested for new visitor attractions. These sites are outside of our town centres in the Green Belt. We need to decide if these sites should be included in the Local Plan. We could consider one of the following options:**

**Option 1: Explore if exceptional circumstances exist, which would allow us to allocate some of these sites.**

**Option 2: Continue to encourage new visitor attractions to be focused within our existing centres.**

Visitor attractions help to support the visitor economy and make the BCP area an attractive destination. Government policy sets out that leisure, entertainment, cultural and tourism development are "main town centre uses" and therefore should be directed into defined centres.

A range of visitor and cultural attractions exist across Bournemouth, Christchurch and Poole. However, our evidence suggests that trips to museums/art galleries is relatively low, with significant leakage to London. The BCP Cultural Enquiry identified the opportunity to enhance cultural infrastructure across the area creating a network of cultural hubs. We are now setting up a Cultural Compact to help drive this work forward and the Local Plan will support the creation of cultural hubs within the town centres.

We have also had some sites promoted to us for leisure and visitor attractions around Hurn. The sites are shown in Figure 10 below and set out in more detail in Appendix 3.

These sites are all situated in the Green Belt. The area is also sensitive due to the proximity to a protected area of Dorset Heathland, Moors River SSSI, the Hurn heritage conservation area, listed buildings, quiet walking routes on existing lanes and Bournemouth Airport. The area has seen some improvements to road junctions and walking and cycling routes, visitor attractions in this area would however likely to be car focused.

Due to the location of the sites within the Green Belt if we were going to consider any of them for allocation we would have to consider if exceptional circumstances can be demonstrated. We have not come to any conclusion about whether any of these sites would be suitable for leisure development or if exceptional circumstances exist.

We would welcome your views on these sites as part of the consultation process. To have your say you can complete our survey or drop pins to add comments directly onto the interactive map [here](#).

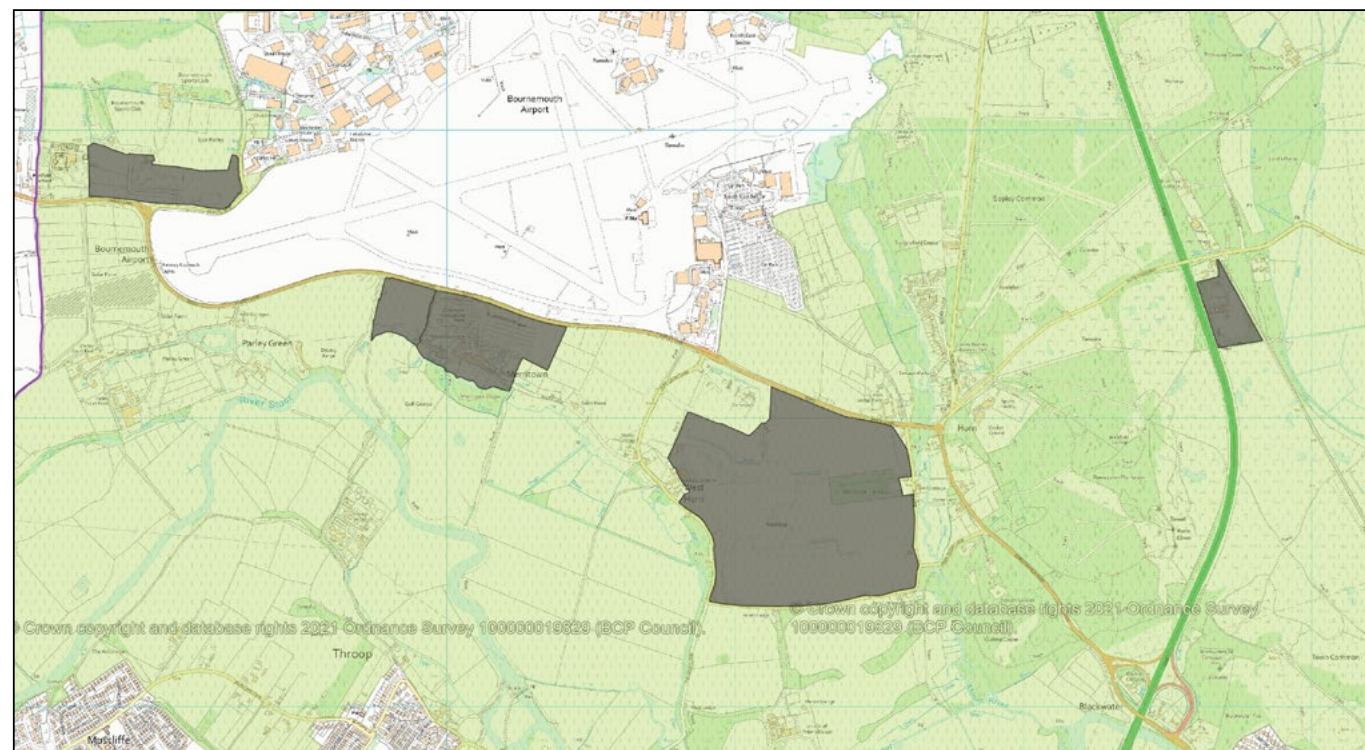


Figure 10 - Sites suggested to us for new visitor/leisure attractions

## 4.4 Adapting our high streets and retail areas

### Objective: Adapt our high streets and shopping areas to cater for changing retail demands

There have been major economic and social changes in the last ten years which have changed the way we shop, affecting patterns of retail development and the development of new types of shops. The key areas of change are the rise in internet shopping, the rapid growth of discount retailers, the 'convenience' shopping concept, the consolidation of investment into fewer larger centres and an overall decline in the demand for town centre retail floorspace.

The Covid-19 pandemic has compounded the challenges of town centres further. Numerous businesses including large high street chains have closed or moved to being online businesses, and many premises in town centres now remain vacant. Increased online shopping and an increase in home working has accelerated changing shopping patterns and trends.



### Issue: Our needs for shopping and other town centre uses

#### Recommendation: The government require us to set out a hierarchy of centres.

These are used to help direct development to appropriate locations and to inform any strategies about the future of each centre. We propose the hierarchy shown in table 2 with Bournemouth and Poole defined as sub-regional town centres and Christchurch as a town centre.

The government require that we define a network and hierarchy of centres. These are used to help direct development to appropriate locations and to inform any strategies about the future of each centre. We also have to consider how we will meet our anticipated needs for retail, leisure, office and other main town centre uses and how these requirements can be met over the Local Plan period.

The BCP Retail Study 2021 recommends a hierarchy of centres which is summarised in Table 2 and set out on our interactive map at [bcp council.gov.uk/localplanretail](http://bcp council.gov.uk/localplanretail). We propose to use this hierarchy of centres in the final version of the Local Plan. We would welcome your views on the hierarchy as part of the consultation process. To have your say you can complete our survey or drop pins to add comments directly onto the interactive map [here](#).

The Retail Study also sets out the potential floorspace which is needed over the Local Plan period. This is shown in Table 1.

	Bournemouth	Christchurch	Poole	Total
Convenience retail (sqm gross)	745	-645	144	244
Comparison retail (sqm gross)	-7,224	-2,559	-6,137	-15,920
Food/ beverage (sqm gross)	7,486	2,442	3,431	13,358
Total (sqm gross)	1,007	-762	-2,562	-2,317

Table 1. Retail and food and beverage floor space needed 2022 - 2038.

The figures show that going forward there is a large over-supply of comparison retail (higher value products such as household goods or clothing) floorspace within the BCP area and a small over-supply of convenience retail (everyday items such as food) projected within Christchurch, whilst only a minor increase in convenience retail floorspace is required within Bournemouth and Poole. However, there is a significant need for food and beverage floorspace which is projected. This is heavily influenced by the growing trend in cafés and restaurants which is ever more evident within a tourist destination area like Bournemouth, Christchurch and Poole.

Overall, these forecasts indicate that the decline in comparison retail floor space is likely to be taken up by food and beverage space. Overall, there is still an over-supply of floor space and this may lead us to review the size of some of our retail areas.

Table 2. Proposed retail hierarchy

Designation	Function and Strategy	Location		
Sub-Regional Town Centres	Main town centres serving the sub-regional area to provide a wide range of facilities and services and be the focus for major growth.	Bournemouth Poole		
Other Town Centres	Main town centres but serving more of the local area to provide a wide range of facilities and services.	Christchurch		
Major District Centres	Smaller than town centres and serving more of the local catchment but still providing a wide range of facilities and services including shops, banks, community facilities, and often including a small supermarket.	Boscombe Castlepoint (Castle Lane West) Upper Parkstone (Ashley Road) Westbourne Winton		
Minor District Centres	Same as above with major district centres but smaller.	Ashley Cross Boscombe East Broadstone Charminster Highcliffe Holdenhurst Road (Springbourne)		
Major Local Centres	Smaller than district centres, local centres serve a smaller and more local catchment with a range of shops which can often include some basic community facilities such as a doctor's surgery, pharmacy or dentists.	Adastral Square Alder Road Barrack Road Bournemouth Road Branksome Canford Cliffs Canford Heath Castle Lane West/ Bradpole Road	Castle Lane West/West Way Charminster Avenue Columbia Road Hamworthy Hill View Road Lilliput Parkgates Southbourne Crossroads	Penn Hill Purewell Queen's Road The Grove Wimborne Road Northbourne

Minor Local Centres	Same as above with major local centres but much smaller.	Anchor Road Ashley Road (East) Bearwood Bournemouth Road (East) Broadway Charminster Road Christchurch Road & Warnford Creekmoor Cunningham Crescent East Howe Lane Fairmile Parade Falcon Drive Fulwood Avenue Iford Roundabout	Marlow Drive Merley Mudeford Oakdale Ringwood Road/Poole Lane Ringwood Road (Walkford) Salterns Somerford Road (East) Somerford Road (West) St Catherines Parade Tatnam Waterloo (Milne/MarshallRoad) Wonderhalm Parade
Neighbourhood Parades	Usually a small number of shops serving the immediate area.	Avon View Parade Bennet Road Burton Green Bure Lane Arcade Castle Lane West/Muscliffe Lane Cranleigh Road Gillam Road	Hurn Village Hunt Road Jellicoe Drive Kimberley Road Saulfland Place Stour Road Wimborne/Hillcrest Road
Retail Parks	Falling outside of town centres and traditionally for DIY and bulky goods.	Mallard Road Retail Park Christchurch Retail Park Tower Retail Park (Mannings Heath) Westover Retail Park (Castle Lane West) Meteor Retail Park	Stony Lane Retail Park Poole Retail Park Turbary Retail Park (Ringwood Road) Wessex Gate Retail Park / Fleetsbridge

## Issue: Town centre boundaries and primary shopping areas

Defining the boundaries of our centres and primary shopping areas helps us direct retail, leisure and entertainment facilities, offices, arts, culture and tourism uses into the most suitable locations. We could consider one of the following options:

**Option 1: We could retain the existing boundaries of the town, district and local centres and the Primary Shopping Areas.**

**Option 2: We could review the boundaries, with a view to reducing their size, in order to concentrate commercial activity into smaller areas to respond to increasing numbers of vacant units.**

The government sets out that we should define town centre boundaries and Primary Shopping Areas and make clear the range of uses permitted in such locations as part of a positive strategy for the future of each centre.

A town centre boundary can apply to a range of centres including town, district and local centres. Government guidance is that “main town centre uses” should be directed to these areas. Main town centre uses include retail, leisure and entertainment facilities (including restaurants, bars, pubs, nightclubs, indoor bowling centres and health and fitness centres) offices, arts, culture and tourism development (including theatres, galleries, hotels and conference facilities).

Defining the town centre and other centre boundaries is important in directing the location of new development. Our town centre and other centre boundaries can be viewed on our interactive map at [bcp council.gov.uk/localplanretail](http://bcp council.gov.uk/localplanretail), an extract of which is shown in Figure 11.

We could keep these boundaries the same or we could review them to see if it some areas should be reduced in size. This would concentrate



Figure 11 - Shopping centre boundaries

commercial activity into a smaller area. We would welcome your views on the boundaries as part of the consultation process. To have your say you can complete our survey or drop pins to add comments directly onto the interactive map [here](#).

A Primary Shopping Area is an area within a centre where retail development is concentrated. Across the main town centres of Bournemouth, Christchurch and Poole there are separate town centre boundaries, which are drawn widely across the functional town centre area and Primary Shopping Area boundaries where retail is focused. District and local centre boundaries throughout the BCP area do not currently have separate Primary Shopping Areas (PSAs) identified.

We could continue to retain separate town centre and PSA boundaries in Bournemouth, Christchurch and Poole town centres whilst in other centres a single boundary should suffice.

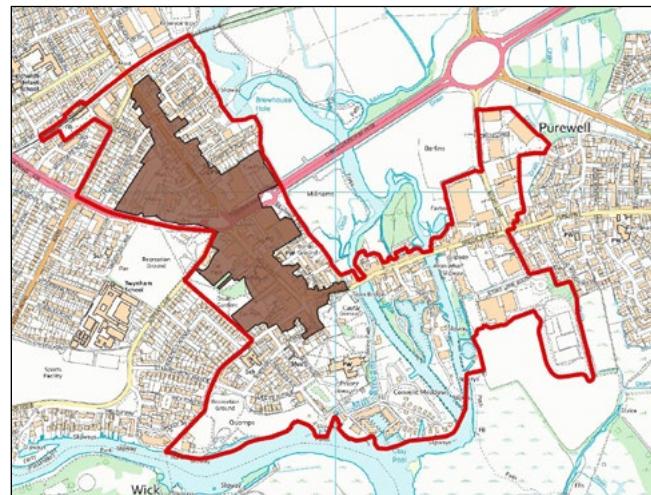


Figure 12 - Christchurch town centre and primary shopping area



Figure 13 - Bournemouth town centre and primary shopping area

## Issue: Sequential tests and impact assessments

We have to apply the sequential test in line with government policy. For the impact assessment we have options over which threshold we require the test. We could consider one of these options:

## Option 1: Adopt a threshold of 400 sqm.

## Option 2: Work with the national threshold of 2,500 sqm.

**Option 3: Adopt a different approach with a different threshold or different thresholds for different locations.**

National government policy supports what is known as a sequential approach, which aims to direct town centre uses into town centres and limit such uses outside of defined centres. This helps to protect and maintain the vitality and viability of existing centres. If a main town centre use or leisure development is proposed outside of a defined centre, government policy also requires an impact assessment. This aims to set out the impact on existing centres.

Government policy sets out a threshold of 2,500 sqm gross for developments which require an impact assessment. However, Local Plans can set out a lower threshold where this is considered appropriate. We propose to adopt a lower threshold of 400 sqm (gross). This would allow us to consider the impacts of larger developments on our centres and strengthen their role. The 400 sqm (gross) threshold corresponds with the Sunday Trading Act where anything over 400 sqm (gross) or 280 sqm (net) is defined as a large shop.

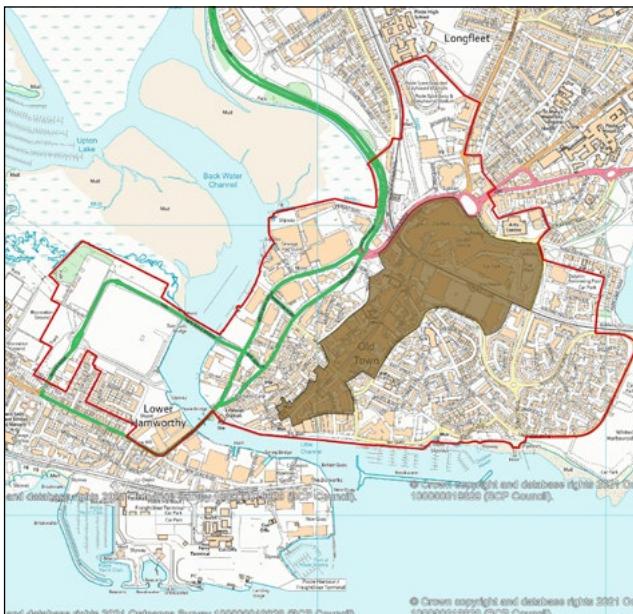


Figure 14 - Poole town centre and primary shopping area

## Issue: Vibrant centres

Due to government rules, we have less control over the change to use from a shop to other uses, including residential. However, for larger units and those in heritage areas, we retain some options to help manage change. We could consider both of these options:

**Option 1: Restrict the loss of existing premises over 1,500 sqm in Class E (shops, professional services, restaurants, offices, light industrial, clinics, crèches and gyms) use where it would affect the vitality and vibrancy of a centre.**

**Option 2: Identify the heritage Conservation Areas where changes of use from Class E to residential would likely have a harmful impact on the character and sustainability of the Conservation Area.**

Previous policy approach has been aimed towards the retention of existing main town centre uses within centres to ensure that they remain vibrant places and continue to meet retail needs. Whilst this is still considered an appropriate and necessary approach, the government has made some recent changes to the use classes order and permitted development which need to be considered.



The planning system includes the use class order which places different uses in different classes allowing policies to be drafted to direct different uses into different locations and control changes of use.

In September 2020 the government introduced the new use class (Class E) which replaces and combines the former uses for shops (A1), professional services (A2), restaurants (A3), offices and light industrial (B1), clinics, crèches and gyms. This gives more flexibility for premises in the Class E use class to change use without the need for planning permission. We have therefore lost some of the previous controls to retain retail shops.

In August 2021, the government introduced more changes which will allow premises falling within Class E to be changed to residential without full planning permission. This means that premises in shopping areas could be changed to residential resulting in the loss of a commercial frontage which we would previously have resisted. A

process called Prior Approval is still needed which is subject to some limitations and criteria, for example proposals involving re-development of a site or changes of use over (1,500 sqm floorspace) will still require full planning permission. We could seek to resist change of use or redevelopment proposals of 1,500sqm where it would affect the vibrancy of our centres.

The government has also included a criteria within the prior approval where the building is located in a Conservation Area and would involve a change of use of the whole or part of the ground floor which is to consider the impact on the character or sustainability of the Conservation Area. This could be considered on an individual basis, although it might provide more clarity to identify those Conservation Areas which are traditionally commercial. To give clarity we could seek to identify those Conservation Areas where changes of use to residential would affect the character and sustainability of the conservation area.

## 4.5 Providing a safe, sustainable and convenient transport network

**Objective: Provide a safe, sustainable and convenient transport network, with a step change in active travel behaviour, ensuring the necessary transport infrastructure is in place to make it easy for everyone to get around**

Our region suffers from traffic congestion.

Bournemouth is the third most congested place in the UK. Our area's unique geography and lack of joined-up travel infrastructure has, in some places, led to over-reliance on cars, slower journey times and poor air quality.

The required housing growth, economic ambitions and climate change issues mean that new sustainable infrastructure is vital to help connect people and places in a way that also protects the planet.

We are currently preparing the Local Transport Plan (LTP4) which will set out the strategy for the management, maintenance and development of the area's transport system and inform the next stage of the Local Plan and its Transport Strategy.

The LTP4 will be drafted in 2022. However, we know from LTP3 and existing transport projects, that our Strategy will need to be focused on providing a safe, connected, accessible and low carbon transport network that reduces the reliance on car-use and maximises non-car travel. This is consistent with the government's approach to reducing the need to travel, offer genuine choice of transport modes, reduce congestion and emissions and improve air quality.

### Issue: Our future transport strategy

**Recommendation: We will need to include a transport strategy in the Local Plan and this will be focused on providing a safe, connected, accessible and low carbon transport network across Bournemouth, Christchurch and Poole and south-east Dorset, which seeks as appropriate to:**

- **direct new development to the most sustainable, and accessible locations to reduce the need to travel and maximise non-car travel.**
- **improve cycling and walking routes and facilities.**
- **improve bus and rail services.**
- **investigate opportunities for innovative mass transport schemes.**
- **apply traffic management measures to improve safety for all road users.**
- **maximise opportunities to increase rail freight transport to and from Poole Port.**
- **explore park and ride opportunities.**
- **identify transport infrastructure requirements to deliver the Local Plan development allocations.**
- **improve cycling and public transport connections to the airport and its business parks.**
- **provide adequate public car parking provision and electric vehicle charging points.**
- **improve air quality.**

## Issue: Transport infrastructure

### Recommendation: We propose to set out strategic transport schemes, identifying and protecting routes and sites which could be critical to delivering transport infrastructure and widening transport choice.

Delivering transport infrastructure is an essential part of delivering sustainable development and to ensure access to housing, employment, services and facilities.

A particular focus over the Local Plan period will be on strategic transport infrastructure required to manage traffic congestion, reduce emissions, enhance walking and cycling routes and improve connectivity in line with the delivery of development. Transport connections are one of the most important infrastructure issues when considering new development.

The government advises that transport issues should be considered from the earliest stages of developing a Local Plan and that planning policies should be prepared with the active involvement of transport authorities and other transport infrastructure providers and operators.

A variety of projects are already in progress or planned to improve transport connections over the Local Plan period. These are identified in existing Local Plans, Local Transport Plan 3, the Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan and emerging transport strategies.

Current strategic transport schemes that are likely to come forward include:

- investigating the potential for a package of park and ride sites in the conurbation.
- a range of sustainable travel corridors and travel improvements.
- bus infrastructure improvements - new bus stops, lighting, 'smart' traffic, smart ticketing, bus interchange improvements and improved real-time information.

- new local travel app.
- road / junction improvements.
- cycle facilities for businesses, schools, colleges and universities.
- improved pavement access for people with mobility needs.
- upgraded wayfinding (information and signs).
- introduction of e-bikes.
- improvements to the rail network and rail station provision.

As we move forward with the Local Plan, we will also be commissioning further testing of potential site allocations to understand the likely level of additional infrastructure requirements over the Local Plan period. The transport infrastructure required to support development coming forward will form part of the Infrastructure Delivery Plan (IDP) (see section 4.10) and will be set out in the draft version of the Local Plan.



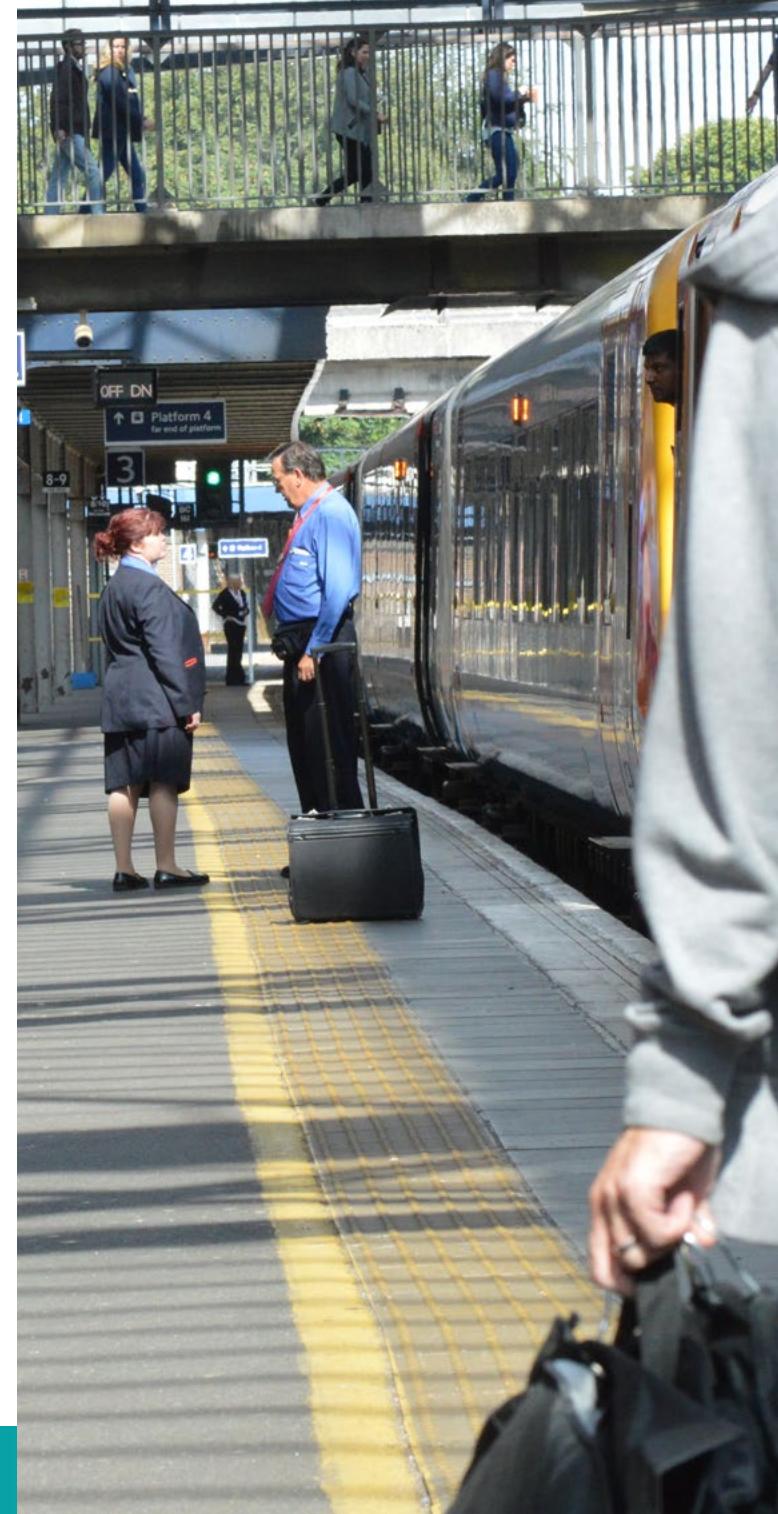
## Issue: Transport impacts from new development

**Recommendation:** When submitting planning applications, we will propose that developers consider a range of transport requirements including:

- Transport Assessment.
- Travel Plans.
- parking provision in line with the [BCP Parking Standards \(SPD\)](#).
- mitigation measures to address traffic/ safety/ congestion.
- the provision of safe and convenient access points.
- electric charging points.
- bike and other vehicle storage.
- making green vehicle technologies available.
- safety for all users.
- developer contribution (to transport modelling or strategic improvements).
- air quality mitigation.
- highway works.
- walking and cycling improvements.

New development can place additional pressure on existing transport infrastructure. Government policy advises that when assessing planning applications for new development, sustainable transport modes should be promoted and that any significant impacts on the transport network or highway safety should be mitigated.

Developments that generate significant amounts of travel should be required to provide a Travel Plan and applications should be supported by a Transport Assessment. Travel Plans aim to ensure that walking, cycling and public transport options are considered, prioritised and incorporated into the development, and measures required to mitigate any impacts on the transport network are included. Therefore, new developments should include all infrastructure that is necessary to the sustainable development of the site and to mitigate any impacts on the wider transport network.



## 4.6 Our natural environment

### **Objective: Conserve and enhance our protected habitats and biodiversity, and our network of green infrastructure and open spaces**

The Bournemouth, Christchurch and Poole area, along with nearby parts of Dorset and Hampshire, is renowned for the quality of its natural environment.

Many of our natural areas are protected under national and international law, whilst some have local importance. These areas are valuable in their own right, as well as for the role they play in attracting people to live, work and visit the area.

We must be particularly mindful of the potential consequences of not meeting our duties under the The Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2010. These require us to mitigate any impacts from development on protected habitats, including those in neighbouring areas, such as the New Forest National Park. If this is not done, we may not be able to issue planning approvals for new homes.

As part of the Local Plan process a Habitats Regulations Assessment will be produced. This will test the impacts of the Local Plan proposals and policies on protected habitats and species while identifying ways to avoid or minimise any effects.

### **Issue: Conserving and enhancing biodiversity and geodiversity**

#### **Recommendation: We propose to fulfil our duty to conserve and enhance biodiversity and geodiversity by including appropriate policies in the Local Plan.**

We have a legal duty to conserve biodiversity. A key role for the Local Plan is to ensure that future growth, especially in terms of housing and the economy, can take place without damaging the high-quality environment that helps to attract growth in the first place. If impacts are unavoidable then we must make sure mitigation is put in place to reduce any harm. This is particularly important in relation to the internationally protected habitats and species designations such as the Dorset Heathlands and Poole Harbour.

The government publish a list of species and habitats of principal importance in England. Species and habitats of local importance in this area are identified within the Dorset Biodiversity Strategy and are



also recognised with designated Sites of Nature Conservation Interest (SNCI), Local Nature Reserves (LNRs) and habitats and species of principal importance to biodiversity, including ancient woodland, veteran trees, watercourses and wetlands. The aims are for all areas that support biodiversity, from those protected by international designations down to species and habitats of local importance, work together, to enable wildlife to thrive.

Maintaining and enhancing a well-connected network of biodiversity assets is a key part of sustainable development. The importance of ecological networks linking wildlife sites is increasingly recognised. This can include relatively small features such as species-rich hedgerows, road verges and ponds. We aim to continue to enhance the BCP area's ecological network by developing, improving and adding to biodiversity and geological assets and the links between them. Information from the Dorset Environmental Records Centre on existing and potential ecological networks will help in achieving this aim.

Government policy encourages biodiversity net gain to be sought through planning policies and decisions. Biodiversity net gain should deliver measurable improvements for biodiversity by creating or enhancing habitats in association with development and can be achieved on or off site. One of provisions of the Environment Act (2021) is the mandatory requirement for new developments to provide 10% biodiversity net gain. We will take into account this requirement in preparing the Local Plan and set out further details required to provide clarity over the requirements and how they relate to the BCP area.

Geodiversity is the range of rocks, fossils, minerals, soils, landforms and natural processes that go to make up the Earth's landscape and structure. The Dorset Local Geodiversity Action Plan aims to promote the conservation and enhancement of the geological resource, provide guidance and increase the appreciation and understanding of the geological heritage of the area. All three existing Local Plans for the legacy authority areas include policies to protect important

geological and geomorphological sites, such as the Bournemouth cliffs and chines and the old sea cliffs at Whitecliff recreation ground.



Figure 15 - BCP's network of protected habitats



## Issue: Protecting Dorset Heathlands and mitigating development impacts

**Recommendation: We propose continuing to implement the approach advocated in the existing Local Plan policies and detailed in the [Dorset Heathlands Planning Framework Supplementary Planning Document](#). We can explore the potential for other approaches that would still fulfil the council's duty to ensure mitigation of harmful impacts on the Dorset Heathlands from new development.**

Evidence shows that the Dorset Heathlands continue to be under significant pressure from urban development. BCP Council, as the local planning authority, and decision maker on planning applications, has a duty to ensure that the impacts of new development are mitigated and is advised by Natural England on how to fulfil these duties.

The former Dorset local planning authorities have, since 2007, operated an approach to dealing with development proposals which is set out in the [Dorset Heathlands Planning Framework Supplementary Planning Document](#) (the Heathlands SPD). This document has been periodically updated with the endorsement of Natural England and provides for a consistent approach across the Dorset Heathlands. Due to the potential adverse impact on heathland arising from human pressures and damage caused by domestic pets the existing local plan policies and the Heathlands SPD indicates that further residential development should not be permitted within 400 metres of a designated heathland. However, there are exceptions to this. For example, certain types of care homes where residents are unable to freely leave to walk on the heath or keep pets.

There may be other land uses, which if in close proximity to the protected heathlands, can lead to increased recreational or access related disturbance. These are considered on a case-by-case basis.

As the majority of visitors to the heathland live within 5km of the site, the Heathlands SPD indicates that between 400 metres and 5km, development involving a net increase in residential units would have a significant effect on the heathland and therefore mitigation measures would be required.

In most instances the mitigation involves financial contributions to a projects fund which is used to provide Heathland Infrastructure Projects (HIPs) which can include provision of new Suitable Alternative Natural Greenspaces (SANGs) or improvement of existing greenspaces to divert pressure from the heaths. In addition, contributions go towards the day-to-day costs of management of the heaths, education and monitoring known as Strategic Access Management and Monitoring (SAMM).

## Issue: Provision of strategic Suitable Alternative Natural Greenspaces (SANGs)

**Recommendation: We propose to continue the current approach to the provision of strategic SANGs through both public and private SANGs, including the continued emergence of SANGs within the Stour Valley Park.**

**We could also explore:**

**Option 1: Changing the use and/or management of some of our existing open spaces e.g. golf courses, to provide strategic SANGs**

The Heathlands SPD sets out the approach to mitigation and how it will be delivered through developer contributions, Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) and legal frameworks. The delivery of SANGs is a key part of this strategy. In some instances, larger residential proposals may be able to provide SANGs on, or near, the development sites. However, in most cases this is not possible and financial contributions can then go towards large strategic SANGs which are sufficiently attractive to draw visitors from a greater distance and can therefore help to provide mitigation for residential developments over a larger area.

The provision of strategic SANGs within the BCP area is critical to the delivery of heathland mitigation. Upton Country Park is a well established strategic SANG which has been expanded over the last ten years. Other SANGs are being developed, have permission or have potential. These include the Two Riversmeet SANG (which incorporates the former Two Riversmeet Golf Course and Stanpit Recreation Ground), Canford Park off Magna Road and Roeshot Hill.

The Stour Valley Park is an emerging area where SANGs have potential to be planned and delivered. The aim is to ensure these are linked together across the area to improve recreational opportunities, encourage wildlife and enhance landscape quality. This would entail the council continuing to work with its partners to identify opportunities to bring forward further land that can join up and deliver the Stour Valley Park and improve existing rights of way. To this end, BCP Council has agreed to become a partner within the Stour Valley Park Partnership who are developing a Stour Valley Park Strategy and Master Plan.



## Issue: Improving the air quality on the Dorset Heathlands

**Recommendation:** We propose to implement the [Dorset Heathlands Interim Air Quality Strategy](#) up to 2025, and then align projects to new policies in the both the BCP Local Plan and the Dorset Local Plan.

The Heathlands SPD lists the main factors impacting on lowland heaths in Dorset. One of the factors identified is roads and more particularly pollution/enrichment causing vegetation change from vehicles in transport corridors.

Population growth normally comes with increased vehicular trips. Where roads pass close to protected heathland sites, nitrogen deposits from the exhausts of fossil fuel propelled vehicles settles upon adjacent heathland sites, enriching the soil with nutrients that enable vegetation to grow that out compete the lowland heathland's native heather plants. An increase in traffic contributes in combination with other polluters such as agriculture to a significant effect upon the integrity of the Dorset Heathlands.



As part of the Local Plan preparation process, we, along with Dorset Council, will need to develop a strategy and policies to ensure that development avoids and, where necessary, mitigates the air quality impacts of increased traffic upon the Dorset Heathlands. That strategy will need to build on current strategies such as improving sustainable travel and the use of electric vehicles to reduce pollution.

As part of this process, BCP Council and Dorset Council have produced a Dorset Heathlands Interim Air Quality Strategy. This document aims to deliver interim measures ahead of the adoption of formal Local Plan policies. Section 6 of the interim Strategy gives an indication of the policies areas that the Local Plan may encourage. Examples include, the change of use of agricultural land near heathland to lower nitrogen inputs and identifying multiple use benefits in the siting of Heathland Infrastructure Projects (HIPs), Poole Harbour Infrastructure Projects (PHIPs) and nitrogen offsetting projects on sites adjacent to heathland.

Given our legal duties related to the heathland habitats, the only reasonable option is to include policies within the Local Plan to address the impact of air quality on the Dorset Heathlands.

## Issue: Dealing with Poole Harbour Recreational Pressures

**Recommendation:** We propose to continue the strategy detailed in the existing [Poole Harbour Recreation SPD](#) and examine whether there are other realistic strategies for dealing with this issue.

Recreational pressures can have a harmful effect on Poole Harbour. Natural England advises that the cumulative effect of further residential and tourism development in a defined 'Poole Harbour Recreation Zone' would have a significant effect upon the Poole Harbour Special Protection Area (SPA) and Ramsar Site. In particular, population growth will increase recreational activities in and around the harbour causing direct or indirect disturbance to protected birds. Disturbance can be defined as any human activity that influences a bird's behaviour or survival. Studies show that public access in and around the harbour, and various forms of recreational activities can cause disturbance, for example, boats, walkers, dogs and bait digging.

A detailed mitigation strategy was formalised in the Poole Harbour Recreation 2019 - 2024 SPD which was adopted by BCP Council and Dorset Council in 2020. In the BCP Council area the mitigation measures are to be paid for by financial contributions from developers of new residential and tourism accommodation in the Poole Harbour Recreation Zone. This will ensure the impact of additional visitors to Poole Harbour can be managed without causing harm to protected wildlife.

## Issue: Dealing with Poole Harbour Nitrate Pollution

**Recommendation: We propose to continue the strategy detailed in the existing Nitrogen Reduction in Poole Harbour SPD and incorporate the strategy into the new Local Plan. We will also examine whether there are other realistic strategies for dealing with this issue.**

Poole Harbour is among the biggest natural harbours in the world and is of major ecological, recreational and commercial importance. However, evidence demonstrates that the harbour is under particular pressure from nitrate pollution.

Excessive nitrogen in the harbour waters causes the growth of algal mats that restrict the food available for protected birds. The majority of nitrogen is generated by agriculture but some is generated from human sewage. Since 2020 we are using a real-time Artificial Intelligence network to monitor water quality.

BCP Council and Dorset Council must be certain that development proposals within the Poole Harbour catchment will either avoid harm to European protected sites or mitigate the impacts to ensure there is no adverse effect. In 2017, the

Nitrogen Reduction in Poole Harbour SPD was adopted by the former Borough of Poole Council and Purbeck District Council. It provides detailed information about the issue and which uses should provide mitigation. The SPD remains in place under BCP Council.

Mitigation can be direct, through upgrading sewage treatment works or indirect, by offsetting the nitrogen generated from new development, for example changing the use of fields where nitrogen fertiliser is applied.

It is important that we effectively mitigate any impacts otherwise we could potentially be in a position where we are unable to issue planning approvals within the Poole Harbour catchment for new residential developments which would otherwise be acceptable. This has happened

recently in the Solent area where there are also nitrate pollution issues and Hampshire planning authorities were unable to issue planning consents. They are addressing the issue by restoring some intensively managed farmland to a wildlife habitat.

We, along with Dorset Council, will need to work in partnership to collect contributions from developers and use them to implement mitigation projects to ensure development within the catchment of Poole Harbour is nitrogen neutral. The council awards grants for projects that change agricultural land from high-to-low nitrate input in order to offset the impact of nutrients entering Poole Harbour. In January 2021, the council agreed to use developer contributions to award a grant to Dorset Wildlife Trust, in order to purchase agricultural land and manage it in perpetuity as low nitrate input. Known as the Dorset Nature Park, this proposal will allow the council to continue to grant planning permission for new homes, as well as providing multiple benefits to residents. This proposal had the support of Natural England.



## Issue: Supporting green infrastructure and open space

**Recommendation: We propose to maintain and expand the Green Infrastructure Network, including the creation of the Stour Valley Park, protecting existing open spaces and enhancing their appeal to more people, connecting green spaces for people and wildlife, and greening the urban area.**

**In addition, for open spaces we could consider a combination of the following options:**

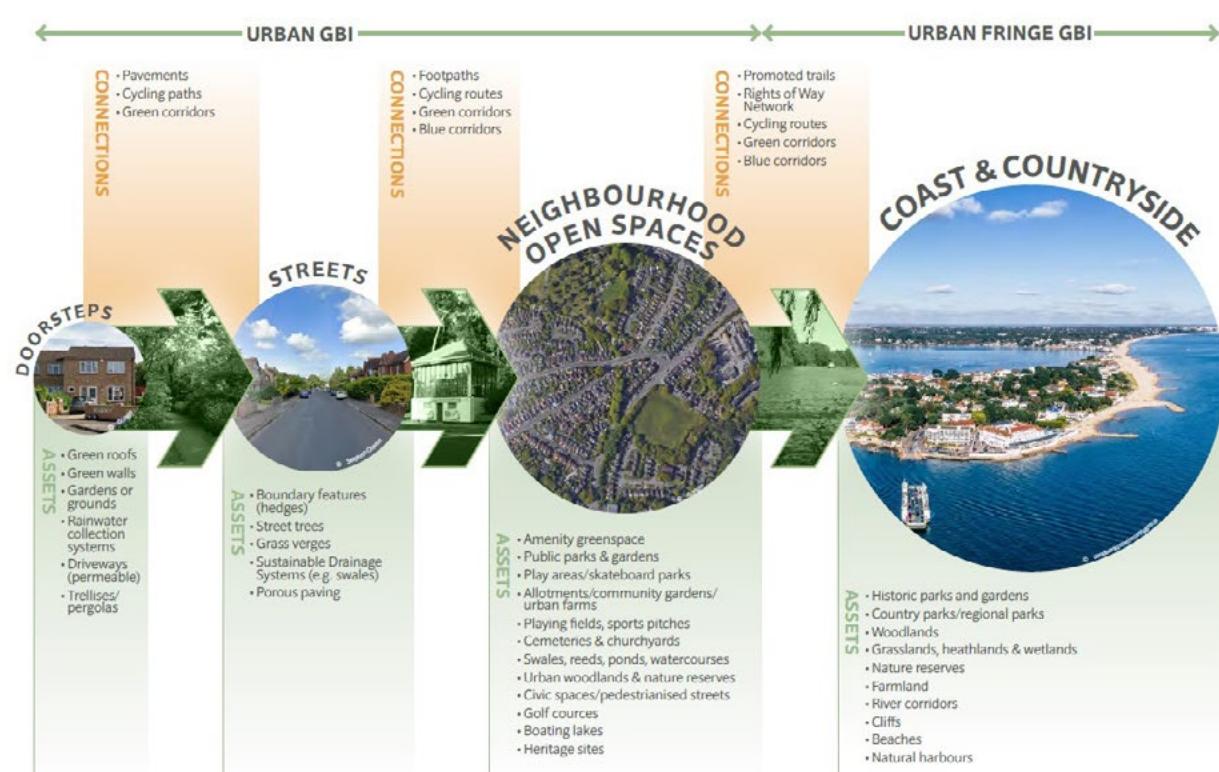
**Option 1: Allowing the loss of the open space, if it can be demonstrated that it is underused and surplus to requirements.**

**Option 2: Allowing the loss of open space for community uses that outweigh the loss of the open space.**

**Option 3: Making new developments pay financial contributions towards enhancing or providing alternative open space if they cannot provide open space on site.**

Green infrastructure is the name given to all our natural and semi-natural assets including parks, playing fields, open spaces, gardens, beaches, street trees, streams, rivers and other water bodies. Together they contribute to the special identity of the BCP area, provide unique wildlife habitats, support health and wellbeing, and are recognised as a major contributor to the economy, in particular supporting tourism and recreation. Green infrastructure provides an ideal nature-based adaptation solution to address climate change. The maintenance and enhancement of the green infrastructure network will be crucial in helping to ensure that the growth set out in the Local Plan can be delivered in a sustainable way.

The government recognises the benefits of green infrastructure and requires us to take a strategic approach to maintaining and enhancing green infrastructure networks.



We are preparing a new Green Infrastructure Strategy for Bournemouth Christchurch and Poole, a draft of this can be viewed at [bcp.gov.uk/localplan](http://bcp.gov.uk/localplan). This identifies a number of key priorities and projects to improve the green infrastructure across the BCP area. One of the key projects in the Strategy is the creation of the Stour Valley Park as a major new park for the BCP area. We have signed up to the Stour Valley Park Partnership to help deliver the park. Other objectives set out in the strategy include re-purposing green spaces to be more multifunctional, connecting green spaces for people and wildlife and greening the urban environment. All development will have a role in supporting our green infrastructure network.

The provision of attractive, accessible and good quality open space is an important part of the green infrastructure network that adds significantly to environmental quality and helps to support physical activity and mental wellbeing. To ensure enough open space exists to meet the needs of residents, it is proposed that existing open spaces, will be retained unless specific circumstances exist.

We think that where a large number of new homes are being built, new areas of open space should be provided. This is sometimes difficult on high density schemes, however, on these schemes we could take developer contributions to improve surrounding open spaces. We could also encourage the greening of the urban area through the introduction of additional planting, green roofs and/or living walls.

Trees play a crucial role in carbon sequestration, supporting biodiversity and enhancing the character of our area. The government has committed to increase tree planting across the UK and to the provision of tree lined streets in new development. In addition, the Local Plan could identify areas for tree planting.

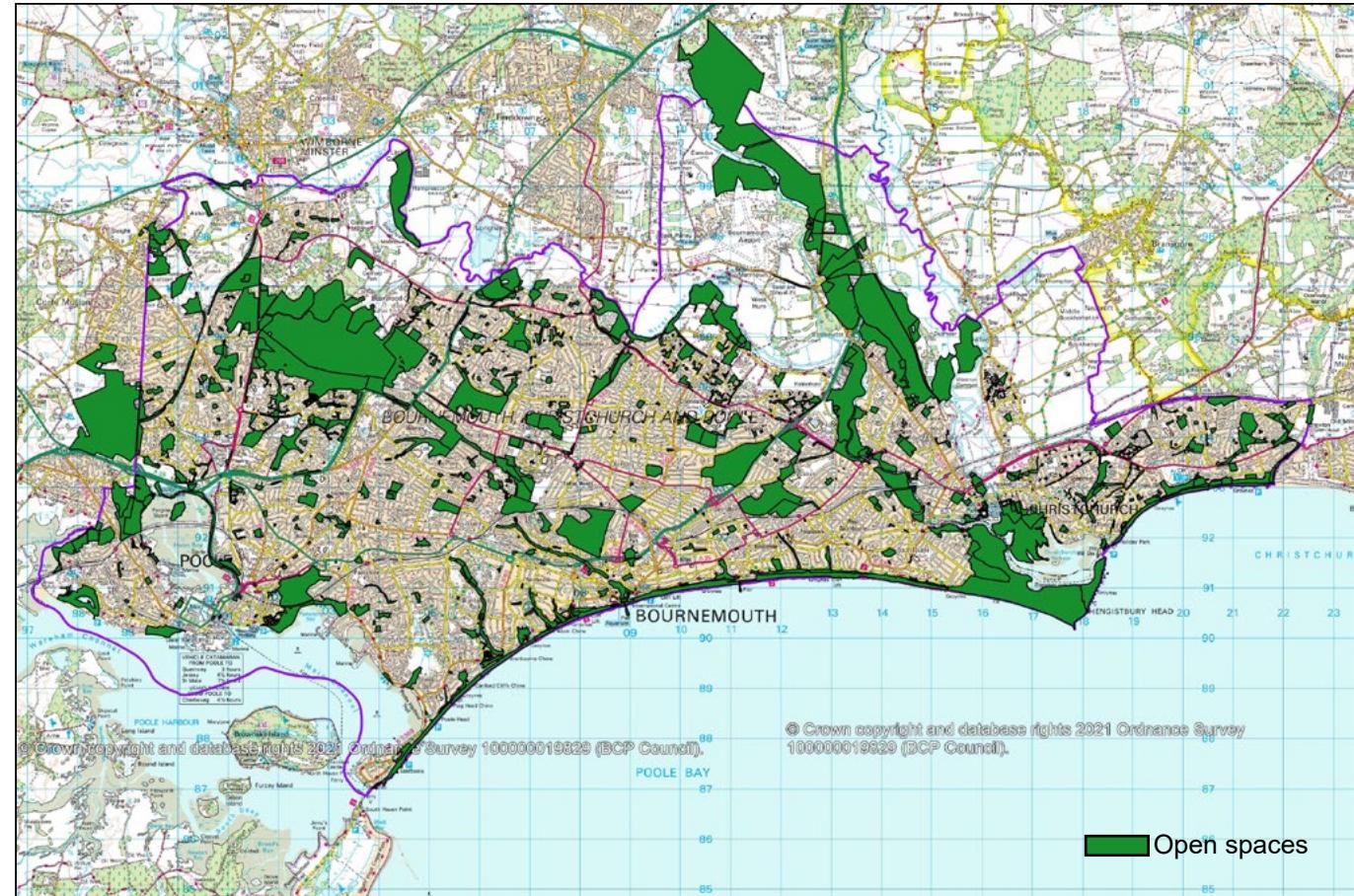


Figure 16 - BCP's network of open space

## 4.7 Our built environment

### Objective: Promote local character and the delivery of high-quality urban design

#### Issue: Ensuring good placemaking and urban design

**Recommendation:** We propose to set out a policy in the Local Plan that requires good design in accordance with the National Design Guide, and that in the majority of cases new development respects the prevailing characteristics of the local area.

National planning policy recognises that achieving high quality places and buildings through good design is an integral part of good planning. To support the commitment to good design the government has adopted a National Design Guide [gov.uk/government/publications/national-design-guide](http://gov.uk/government/publications/national-design-guide). The National Design Guide explains that the long standing, fundamental principles for good design are that buildings and places are fit-for-purpose, durable and bring delight. The National Design Guide provides more detail in the form of ten characteristics of good design, see Figure 17.

In the Local Plan, we are proposing that the design of buildings, streets and spaces should take into account and respond to the requirements of the National Design Guide, with new development based on a design-led approach. Therefore, in most cases development will need to respect the prevailing characteristics of the local area. Development would be expected to be sympathetic to the building heights, massing, positioning and the soft landscaping in the surrounding area. This would ensure development is sympathetic to local character, visually attractive, safe and well laid out. More detailed guidance in the form of design guides and design codes could be developed to help identify the special qualities of different parts of the BCP area and how these should be reflected in development.



Figure 17 - The characteristics of good design (Image credit: Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities).

## Issue: Planning for urban intensification

**Recommendation: We have significant pressures for new homes across Bournemouth, Christchurch and Poole. To help address this, we propose to be proactive about supporting a change in character in specific areas. For example, through allowing building heights to increase or a different type of development to take place.**

We have a significant need for new homes across the BCP area, this is explained in more detail in section 4.2. The government requires us to ensure that, where possible, the new homes needed are built in the urban area where existing facilities, services and public transport exists.

We know from past trends that most new homes built in the urban area are built through the replacement of single buildings with blocks of flats or through plot severance to create additional homes. Where these types of development are done well they can provide new homes that integrate successfully with the existing character of a place through gradual evolution.

We know that people sometimes have concerns about more flats being built. However, increasing the supply of flats can help free up family housing elsewhere where these homes are under occupied and give people the opportunity to purchase a first home or downsize. We anticipate that most development will occur in this way and respond to local character of where it is located. To support

this type of gradual intensification we could set out specific criteria or additional guidance to ensure this type of intensification is designed to respect local character.

We could consider identifying some locations that have significant potential for regeneration, or have a varied character, where we would proactively support a change in character. For example, allowing building heights to increase or different type of development to take place.

Some areas where we could consider supporting a change in character are illustrated on

the interactive map at [bcp council.gov.uk/localplanchange](http://bcp council.gov.uk/localplanchange), an extract of which is shown in Figure 18 and set out in Appendix 4. Typically, these areas are focused on existing services and facilities where there is more capacity for growth. If any of these areas are taken forward, it is anticipated that we would produce more detailed design guidance about what would be appropriate in these locations. We would welcome your views on these areas as part of the consultation process. To have your say you can complete our survey or drop pins to add comments directly onto the interactive map [here](#).



Figure 18 - Areas where we could consider supporting a change in character

## Issue: Tall buildings

To manage tall buildings, we could consider one or both of the following options:

**Option 1: Focus the development of tall buildings into parts of Poole and Bournemouth town centres.**

**Option 2: Allow tall buildings in other areas, subject to criteria considering impact on the skyline, townscape character, microclimate and local amenity.**

Another way in which we have seen urban intensification take place is through an increased number of planning applications for taller buildings, over six storeys high. Taller buildings can have a positive impact on meeting our regeneration and economic development objectives goals, enhance the vitality of places and offer a sustainable form of development. However, due to their size and potential impacts on existing residents, microclimate and the skyline, they need to be considered carefully.

The tallest buildings in the BCP area are currently located in parts of Poole and Bournemouth town centres. We consider that these locations are likely to be the most suitable for tall buildings. However,

parts of the town centres are covered by heritage designations and we are required by government to preserve and enhance heritage designations and their settings. This means that not all parts of the town centre areas are likely to be suitable for taller buildings. As such, we could continue to direct tall buildings within to specific parts of the town centres such as Lansdowne, Richmond Hill, the north part of Poole Town Centre and within the Backwater Channel regeneration area. In these areas, tall buildings would form part of a cohesive group.

Allowing a more flexible approach would change the character in other areas but would help us meet our housing needs.



## Issue: Preserving and enhancing our heritage

**We have to preserve and enhance heritage assets as required by government and would set out a positive strategy for heritage.**

**In addition, we could consider one or both of the following options:**

**Option 1: Consider the introduction of special controls that prevent the demolition of non-designated, locally important heritage assets.**

**Option 2: Undertake a comprehensive review through Conservation Area Appraisals to ensure the designations remain fit-for-purpose.**

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Our built heritage is part of the character of the BCP area and preserving our heritage assets is an important part of planning that has many benefits for culture, wellbeing, the economy and in creating a more unique sense of place.

Government policies refer to heritage assets as any building, monument, place, area or landscape that have heritage interest. Some heritage assets are formally designated under legislation for example, listed buildings, registered parks and gardens and conservation areas. Other assets have local importance but are not formally designated by legislation.

There are many pressures on heritage assets to modernise or demolish historic buildings, change their uses, develop within heritage conservation areas and remove landscaping. Given the irreplaceable contribution heritage assets make, the government make it clear that it is important that heritage assets and their settings are preserved or enhanced as a reminder of the history and evolution of the area.

Our heritage conservation areas and listed buildings are shown on the interactive map at [bcp council.gov.uk/localplanconservation](http://bcp council.gov.uk/localplanconservation).

An extract of which is shown in Figure 19. More information about our heritage assets can be found in the Historical Environment Record (HER), maintained by Dorset Council. We would welcome your views on these areas as part of the consultation process. To have your say you can complete our survey or drop pins to add comments directly onto the interactive map [here](#).

Designated heritage assets are protected by specific planning legislation and national planning policy recognises the conservation of heritage assets as a core planning principle underlining

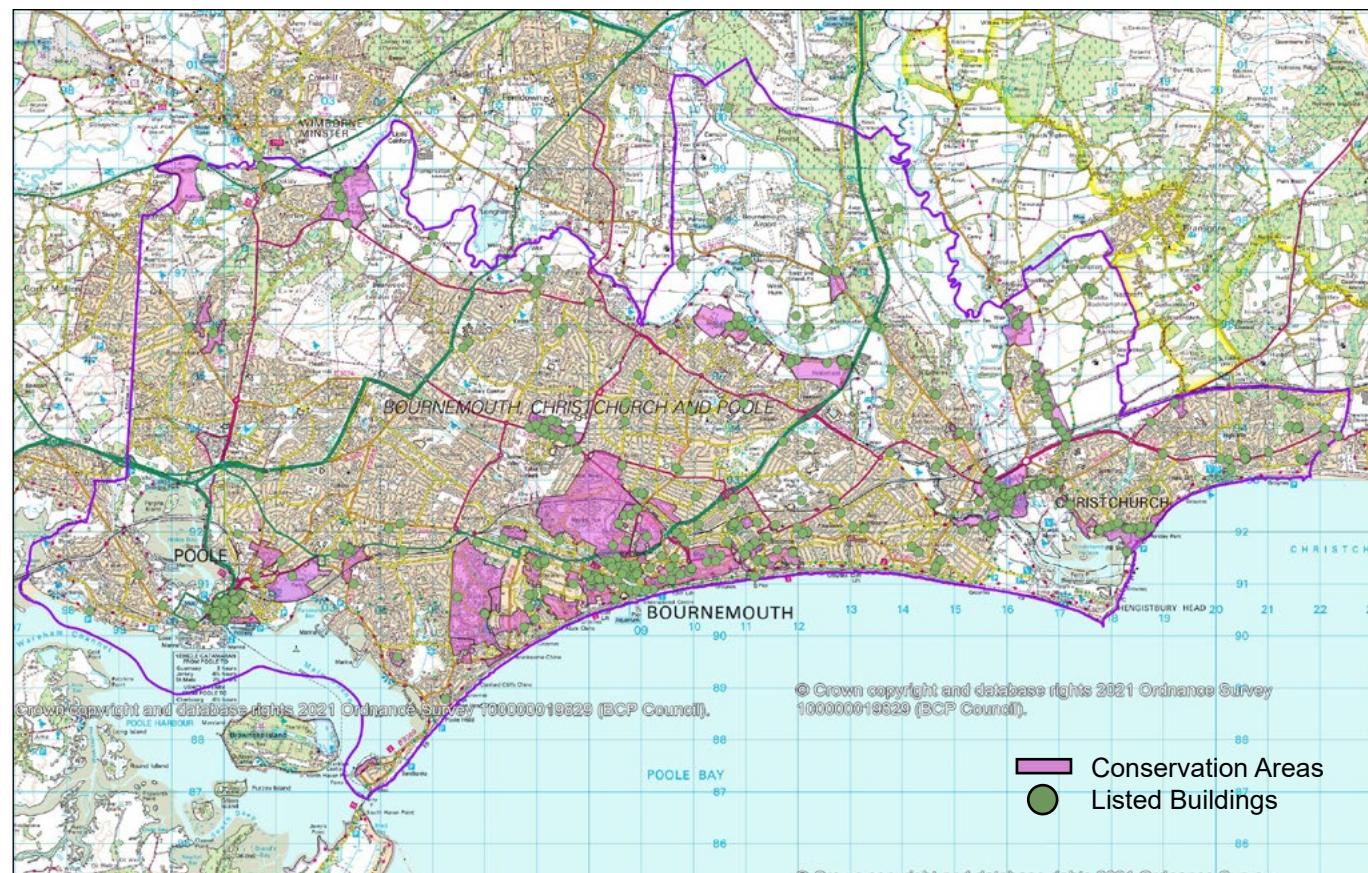


Figure 19 - BCP's heritage conservation areas and Listed Buildings

decision taking. The policies in the Local Plan will seek to apply the heritage legislation and requirements set out in national planning policy. Heritage conservation areas cover some significant parts of Bournemouth, Christchurch and Poole. Many of the conservation areas have not been reviewed since they were originally designated. We could undertake a comprehensive review through Conservation Area Appraisals to ensure the designations remain fit-for-purpose.

Local heritage assets which are not formally designated are currently being reviewed and will be set out on a Local List. We could seek to introduce specific policies and controls to prevent the loss of these assets which contribute to the local identity of our places. This would protect more heritage features. It would prevent some of these buildings being redeveloped or other uses.

Some heritage assets are specifically identified as being 'at risk' on Historic England's 'Heritage at Risk' Register. We will continue to pursue funding opportunities and work with landowners to secure improvements to these heritage assets wherever possible.

One specific area identified on the Register is the Poole Town Centre Conservation Area. Here we have successfully applied for funding to create a Heritage Action Zone to improve the quality of the area and support heritage-led regeneration.

## Issue: Preserving coastal and landscape character

**Recommendation: We want to preserve the character of our locally-valued coastal and countryside areas and propose to set out policies in the Local Plan to achieve this. Landscape Visual Impacts Assessments will be used to help to assess proposals.**

### **Option 1: We could consider a specific policy in coastal areas to ensure development does not dominate or detract from views of the cliffs.**

The government require us to protect and enhance valued landscapes and recognise the intrinsic character and beauty of the countryside. With the exception of the western edge of Poole Harbour, which falls within the Dorset Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty, the landscapes and seascapes within Bournemouth, Christchurch and Poole are not covered by any nationally recognised landscape designations. However, the coastline is an important valued landscape locally and is a particularly important recreational resource, as well as being important to tourism, employment and wildlife. The countryside around the edge of the conurbation is also valued locally for its rural characteristics.

#### **The coast**

The features that contribute to the character and appearance of the shoreline and the coastal zone vary along the length of our coastline. Some areas are very open with few human influences, others are more commercial supporting our vibrant visitor economy. There is a need for investment in some areas of the seafront where infrastructure is ageing. We propose to have a future policy and supplementary guidance that defines the shoreline character and developments that are appropriate in different parts of the coast. This guidance would also reflect the long-term coastal change expected in different parts of the coast. We could aim to ensure structures on the seafront do not dominate the cliffs which would preserve the shoreline character but could result in restricted opportunities for new or upgraded facilities.

#### **The countryside**

We will update our Landscape Character Area Assessment which will provide more detail about the landscape character of the countryside areas around the urban area. In places the open countryside, areas of heathland and tree-lined ridges provide a strong landscape setting for the town which is part of our areas character.

We would want to ensure proposals preserve the semi-natural features of the landscape and its open character. We think that proposals for development in the countryside would need to demonstrate how they preserve its existing character. Landscape Visual Impact Assessments are a useful tool that are likely to be required to help assess any development proposals in these areas.

## 4.8 Promoting health and wellbeing

### Objective: Improve health and wellbeing and contribute towards reducing inequalities

Health is influenced by a wide range of factors and the place we live in can go a long way in influencing our health and wellbeing. The government highlights the role planning can have in creating healthy communities and emphasises the importance of working with Public Health partners to understand the health needs of the local population and to identify barriers to improving health and wellbeing.

Across Bournemouth, Christchurch and Poole there are notable differences in physical and mental health, and life expectancy between the most affluent and deprived wards. Over half of adults are overweight or obese and a third do not meet government physical activity guidelines. Reducing health inequalities and improving overall health is set out as a key strategic priority for Dorset Health Care Trust.

We know planning can directly influence the health of the population through providing quality housing, ensuring access to open spaces, recreational facilities and services, encouraging active lifestyles and limiting exposure to pollution. Health and wellbeing is therefore a cross-cutting theme for the Local Plan which will be addressed by a range of topics.



Figure 20 - The wider determinants of health (Source: Dahlgren and Whitehead)

## Issue: Supporting health and wellbeing

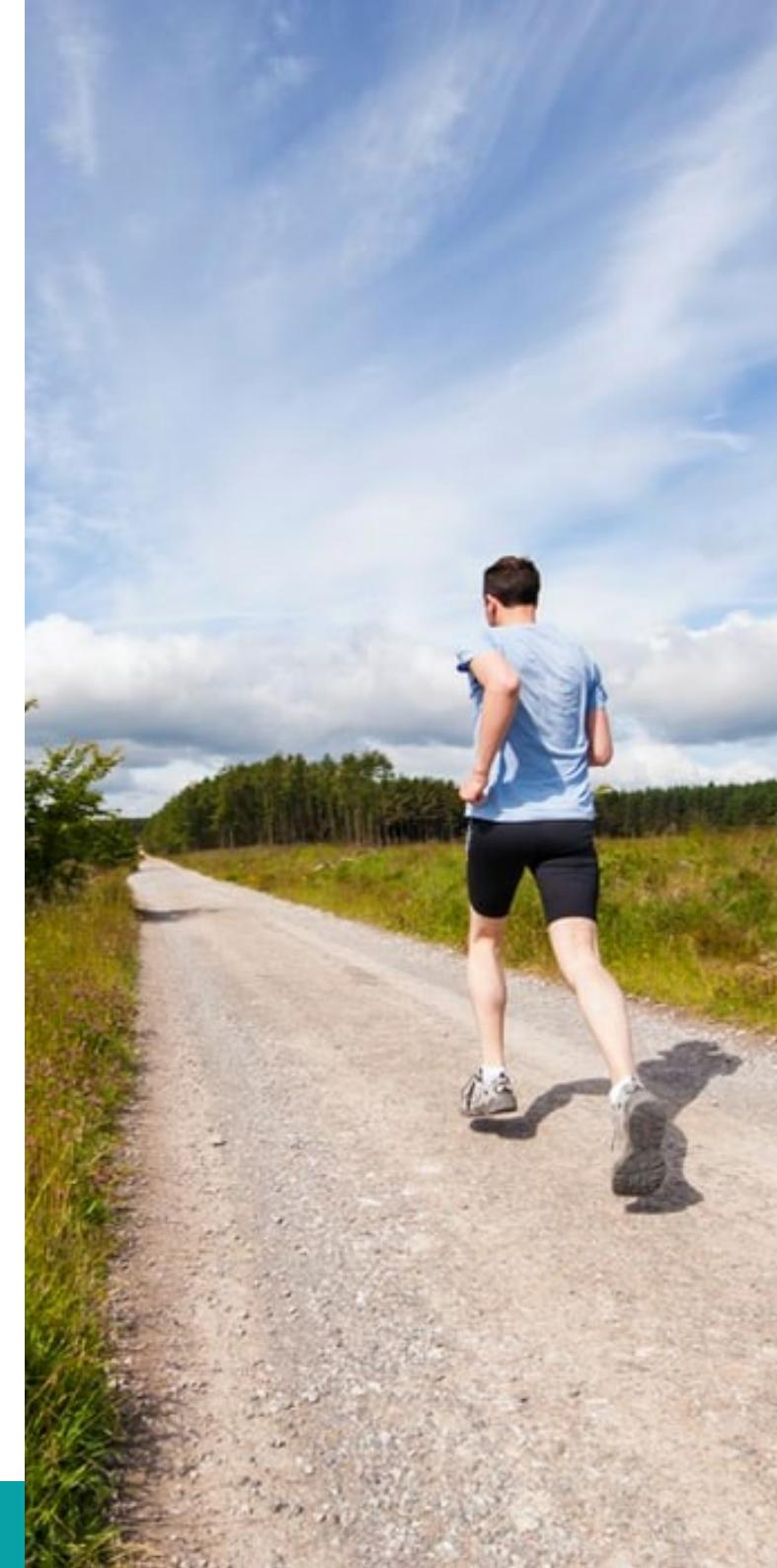
**Recommendation: We propose to set out a specific policy in the Local Plan to support health and wellbeing, and require that certain developments prepare a Health Impact Assessment (HIA). The size and type of development would determine the focus of the HIA and for smaller developments we propose applicants use NHS Rapid Health Impact Assessment Tool assess potential health impacts.**

**Option 1: In addition, we could explore introducing a specific financial contribution from new developments towards health infrastructure.**

To bring this together to ensure that development enhances health and wellbeing and, does not have a negative effect on it, we are suggesting that an overarching policy on health is included, and that certain developments prepare a Health Impact Assessment (HIA). The size and type of development would determine the focus of the HIA and for smaller developments we are proposing applicants use the NHS Rapid Health Impact Assessment Tool to assess potential health impacts, this can be viewed at: [www.healthyurbandevelopment.nhs.uk/wp-content/uploads/2017/05/HUDU-Rapid-HIA-Tool-3rd-edition-April-2017.pdf](http://www.healthyurbandevelopment.nhs.uk/wp-content/uploads/2017/05/HUDU-Rapid-HIA-Tool-3rd-edition-April-2017.pdf)

The NHS is responsible for paying GP practices for their services and they are paid on the basis of the number of patients on their list. New homes do not always result in increased patient lists as sometimes the households are made up of people already living in the area. However, where large, strategic developments are proposed we work with the Dorset Health Care Trust and local surgeries to determine if developer contributions should be taken to fund the expansion of local surgeries. We also collect a financial contribution called Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) which can be spent on infrastructure needed to support developments. More information about CIL is set out in section 4.10. Historically CIL has not been used to fund primary care but we could consider using CIL to help fund primary care locally or set a separate contribution to support primary care. We would need to consider the viability of this alongside other contributions that will be needed to support development.

Another direct health-related issue we could seek to control through our policy is to try and limit the number of hot food takeaways near to schools. It can be difficult to demonstrate a direct link between the proximity of takeaways and childhood obesity. We will collect further evidence about areas of childhood obesity and explore if any planning policies in these areas could help influence healthy eating habits.



## Issue: Ensuring a high standard of amenity

**Recommendation: We want to support a high standard of amenity for existing residents and future occupiers of new homes considering levels of sunlight and daylight, privacy, emissions, noise/vibration and whether a development is overbearing or oppressive.**

**There are some additional options we could explore:**

**Option 1: Setting internal space standards for new residential development in line with the nationally described space standards.**

**Option 2: Setting standards for external space on residential development for flats.**

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The design, layout and type of development proposed can lead to impacts on existing residents as well as future occupiers. One of the roles of the planning system is to ensure high standards of amenity will be enjoyed by future occupiers and that proposals do not have an adverse impact on others. We are therefore proposing that schemes should be designed to ensure a high standard of amenity are provided. This would consider issues such as privacy and levels of natural light. Some further guidance on how development can achieve a good standard of amenity could be set out as supplementary planning guidance.

We also think that it is important that the new homes that are built provide a good standard of living for future occupants. The Covid-19 pandemic has highlighted the importance of good quality housing with sufficient indoor and outdoor space. Working from home has also increased the need for space and flexibility for many households. The government has produced nationally described space standards for internal space. There have been examples of schemes across the BCP area which fall below these standards. Introducing the national standards would ensure that everyone would have access to a reasonable amount of internal space. Although some developers may think this is restrictive and it may impact on development viability, this will be tested through the Local Plan Viability Assessment.

It is acknowledged that there may be some situations where the standards cannot be achieved, for example in schemes where communal spaces are being provided or where the conversion of a historic Listed Building restricts the internal layout options.

We could also consider introducing external space standards. Everyone's requirements and expectations of external space are different, and this might lead to developers providing the minimum standard rather than the variety of sizes we see at the moment. However, ensuring everyone has access to some usable private/communal outside space is important for health and wellbeing.

## 4.9 Tackling climate change

### Objective: Work towards achieving carbon neutrality ahead of 2050 and inspire action to combat the climate and ecological emergency

A range of legislation exists which requires us to contribute to mitigating and adapting to climate change and move towards a low carbon, green economy. Mitigation is the action we need to take to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and adaptation increases the ability of the environment to be resilient to climate change.

Government planning policy encourages local authorities to adopt a proactive strategy to deal with climate change impacts including flood risk, coastal change, biodiversity, and landscapes.

We have pledged our commitment to reducing CO<sub>2</sub> by declaring a Climate and Ecological Emergency in 2019 and maintain a plan of 153 climate change actions, some of which the Local Plan could help to deliver. We recognise the role that the Local Plan has in influencing a range of measures to radically reduce emissions to contribute towards meeting both national and local net zero carbon targets.

It should be noted that evidence shows that in the BCP area, transport forms the largest combined carbon emitting sector comprising approximately 47% of total emissions, followed by homes (29%) and industry (24%). We will take an active approach to reducing carbon emissions from transport as part of our Transport Strategy, see section 4.5.

### Issue: Ensuring new buildings will be built to reduce their energy use and minimise carbon emissions

**Building regulations (Part L) sets out energy efficiency requirements and CO<sub>2</sub> target emission rates for new buildings. Upcoming changes to Part L are expected to be made following a timeline towards 'zero carbon ready' homes and buildings by 2025.**

**We could consider either one of the following options:**

**Option 1: Allow new development to comply with the national building regulation (Part L) requirements.**

**Option 2: Set a higher local standard beyond the building regulations (Part L) requirements.**

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Nationally, there has been a significant drop in CO<sub>2</sub> emissions in residential energy usage over the past 16 years. This is due in part to changes to building regulations, energy efficient boilers, appliances and consumables. However, the government has suggested that this does not go far enough and its Ten Point Plan towards a green industrial revolution has introduced the Future Homes Standard and Future Buildings Standard to update Building Regulations to ensure that by 2025, they will produce 75%-80% less carbon emissions than they do today. The government has said an interim target of 31% reduction will be introduced in 2022 through building regulations.

By 2050, all buildings will need to have an emissions footprint close to zero. Buildings will need to become better insulated, be energy efficient and obtain their lighting, heating/cooling from low carbon sources.

Government has clarified that local authorities will retain powers to set higher local energy efficiency standards in local plans, but that they should not exceed a target beyond 19% carbon emissions improvement over building regulations. Setting a higher target would help address climate change

impacts but may affect the viability of development. We will be exploring this through our viability work on the Local Plan. If we were to set standards locally, this could include minimum requirements for development to provide renewable energy and where appropriate, a requirement for development to meet one of the BREEAM ratings depending on its size. BREEAM is a nationally accredited sustainability assessment method.

The government has confirmed that new buildings should be built to reduce costly retrofitting in the future, enabling development to be 'zero carbon ready' for the future homes/building standard. The energy hierarchy in figure 21 is a useful approach for development schemes to minimise energy consumption and environmental impact. It starts with 'Be Lean' looking at the buildings design such as high levels of insulation and high efficiency lighting. 'Be Clean' considers how to use energy efficiently. The third step is 'Be Green' which is about generating a proportion of energy from renewable sources. This could be used by applicants to help demonstrate how they have considered their approach to energy efficiency.

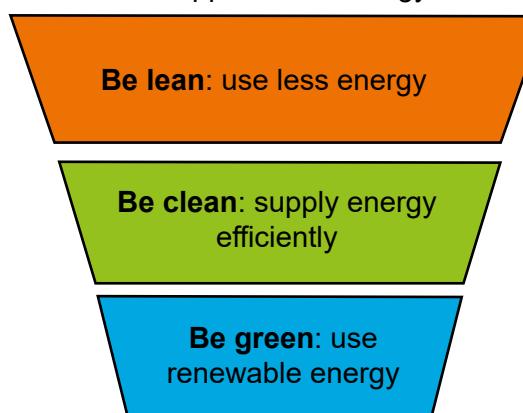


Figure 21 - The energy hierarchy

## Issue: Maximising the uptake of energy from renewable sources

To maximise the uptake of energy from renewable sources we could consider one, or both, of the following options:

**Option 1: Consider allocating specific areas for delivering large scale renewable/low carbon technologies and associated infrastructure.**

**Option 2: Determine renewable and low carbon energy proposals, subject to policy criteria for example, respecting landscape quality and residential amenity.**

Government is strongly supportive of increasing the use and supply of renewable and low carbon energy to reduce CO<sub>2</sub> and drive growth in the green economy. Local Plans must set a strategy that increases the uptake of renewable energy technology as a low carbon solution to heating/cooling. This could be achieved through technologies such as solar farms, onshore wind farms and district heating schemes.

We recognise that our area is tightly constrained and may be unsuitable for onshore wind farms or other large-scale renewable energy technology due to the wider environmental impacts, especially on landscape and habitats. However, there may be other opportunities for district heating systems.

Identifying areas suitable for commercial renewable energy development would provide certainty about the location of large-scale renewable/low carbon technologies. To identify and allocate sites, we would need to consider economic viability, landscape impacts and any impacts on heritage and natural assets. We would need to commission further evidence in the form of a renewable energy strategy to advise if there are any suitable areas for large scale renewable energy and how best to implement elements of BCP Council's Climate Change Strategy and support Local Plan policies.

If we do not allocate sites or identify areas, sites that come forward could be dealt with on a case-by-case basis in line with national policy and guidance.

## Issue: Flood and coastal erosion risk management

**Recommendation: In line with government guidance, we propose to direct the majority of development to areas of lowest flood risk. If any development has to take place in an area at risk of flooding because there is no alternative location, we will ensure that appropriate flood risk alleviation measures are provided. We also propose to require the provision of sustainable drainage systems in new developments.**

Government guidance sets out how the planning system should help minimise vulnerability and provide resilience to the impacts of climate change. Predicted future rises in sea levels because of climate change, combined with the predicted increases in frequency of severe rainfall events, makes more areas vulnerable to the risk of flooding. Our evidence shows that the main types of flooding in the BCP area occur from tidal and coastal flooding, rivers (fluvial), surface water (pluvial) and to a lesser extent groundwater flooding.

The government sets strict tests to protect people and property from flooding with a general approach of directing development into the areas at lowest risk from flooding. However, exemptions can exist and strategic policies in Local Plans are expected to be informed by strategic flood risk assessment, considering the cumulative impacts in local areas susceptible to flooding.

We will be producing a new Strategic Flood Risk Assessment for the BCP area to replace those of the legacy authorities. Other evidence is being prepared, including a new Local Flood Risk Management Strategy, a Shoreline Management Plan and Christchurch Town Centre Flood Risk Strategy.

We know that both Christchurch and Poole town centres are at risk of flooding, predominantly from tidal and fluvial sources. However, we are exploring exemptions to see if development can be provided in these areas which will be safe for its lifetime. Bournemouth is currently less affected by tidal and fluvial flooding but has some surface water flooding

issues where the drainage system is unable to accommodate intense rainfall events. The impacts of flooding are likely to be increased by climate change. The Local Plan can provide an opportunity to reduce surface water flooding through reduction in impermeable surfaces and ensuring the use of sustainable drainage systems in new development.



Figure 22 - Areas at risk from fluvial and coastal flooding

## 4.10 Providing infrastructure that supports development

### Objective: Deliver the infrastructure needed to support development, local communities and businesses

We want to ensure that there is sufficient and appropriate infrastructure in place to support the planned growth of housing and employment development.

Infrastructure covers a wide variety of services and facilities provided by public and private organisations that are needed to support daily activities for residents and the general economy. This includes:

- transport infrastructure: rail, transport interchanges, bus facilities, cycle routes, footpaths/pedestrian links, roads, electric vehicle charging points.
- flood risk measures: strategic flood defences, flood management schemes, Sustainable Drainage Systems (SUDS).
- telecommunications infrastructure, including broadband and 5G.



- utilities: energy supplies including renewable energy, water supply and treatment, and waste disposal.
- Habitats Regulations mitigation: interventions necessary to mitigate the effects of development on nature conservation sites such as Suitable Alternative Natural Greenspace (SANGs) and Heathland Infrastructure Projects.
- green infrastructure: open spaces, recreation areas, green networks/corridors, allotments, tributaries, rivers and coastlines.
- community facilities and services: education, health, sports and leisure facilities, emergency services, libraries, cultural facilities, cemeteries
- town and local centre improvements: enhancements and new public facilities.

## Issue: Delivering the infrastructure to support growth

### Recommendation: We propose to work with infrastructure providers and funding bodies to develop an Infrastructure Delivery Plan to sit alongside the Local Plan and continue to fund infrastructure from developer contributions.

The government requires us to include strategic policies which make sufficient provision for infrastructure and to engage with infrastructure providers to determine where additional infrastructure is necessary. We are advised to identify what infrastructure is required, how it can be funded and delivered, and how future ongoing maintenance requirements will be managed.

We are in the process of preparing an Infrastructure Delivery Plan (IDP), setting out the key infrastructure required to support the level of planned growth across the area. This will be published alongside the Local Plan at the next stage of consultation. It will identify details of the infrastructure needed to support the Local Plan and will include information on:

- investing in sustainable transport to improve accessibility and manage congestion.
- delivery of new public open space such as Stour Valley Park.
- enhancement of beach through the emerging BCP Seafront Strategy.
- additional schools' capacity to support housing sites.
- health and medical facilities.
- other community facilities.

The IDP will identify key infrastructure needs, costs and any gaps in funding. It will also consider the funding mechanisms required to secure

infrastructure in a timely manner and facilitate growth. In some cases where an infrastructure need is identified land may need to be allocated in the Local Plan, for example for a new school or cultural facility.

It is critical that sufficient infrastructure is available to serve new development and that it is delivered in a timely manner to ensure the needs of the occupiers of new development can be met without placing undue burdens on existing infrastructure facilities and services. Any new infrastructure will also need to be maintained over its lifetime. The infrastructure arising from new development may sometimes be required on site or in other cases it will be more appropriately provided off-site, depending on the scale and location of the development.

#### Infrastructure funding

Infrastructure can be funded through different mechanisms including development contributions, grants or loans, statutory organisations or funding drawn from charges to customers.

Where development will have an impact on infrastructure, we collect financial contributions to fund infrastructure requirements. These contributions are either collected through Section 106 (s106) Legal Agreements or via Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL).

CIL is a contribution made by most new developments, although some are exempt. The contributions can be pooled together and spent on strategic infrastructure projects. We have to prepare a CIL charging schedule which sets out the amount of money which will be collected for different types of developments. A BCP CIL Charging Schedule will be prepared alongside the Local Plan.

S106 Agreements are used to address the direct impacts of new developments by providing infrastructure or paying a financial contribution. We use S106 to secure affordable housing and any site-specific infrastructure required to make the development acceptable in planning terms. There are specific tests that must be met to use S106 Agreements that are set out in legislation.



We will continue to collect developer contributions through S106 and CIL and spend money collected on delivering essential infrastructure such as heathland mitigation and to benefit local communities.

The government expects Local Plans to set out any development contributions expected from development, for example those for affordable housing provision. However, it makes clear that these policies should not undermine the deliverability of the Local Plan. As such, we have to test the overall viability of the Local Plan and the CIL Charging Schedule to ensure development can still be delivered.

The government recommends that we prepare an Infrastructure Funding Statement. This will set out future spending priorities on infrastructure and affordable housing in line with emerging Local Plan priorities. It will also set out the funding from developer contributions, and the choices local authorities have made about how these contributions will be used.

Given the government requirements surrounding infrastructure, we propose to work with infrastructure providers and funding bodies to develop an Infrastructure Delivery Plan and to continue to fund infrastructure from developer contributions.

## Issue: Balancing the delivery of infrastructure with viable development

**Recommendation: Where an applicant sets out that a proposal would not be viable if it were compliant with all the policies that will be in the Local Plan, we propose to require the submission of a Viability Assessment. We would use the assessment to calculate the contributions applicants can make towards infrastructure. We will continue to require the independent scrutiny of submitted viability assessments and will consider introducing measures to strengthen that process and improve transparency.**

To be deliverable, development must be viable, and government requires that careful attention is given to viability and the costs of development.

The Local Plan needs to clearly set out the contributions expected from development including the levels and types of affordable housing provision required, along with any other infrastructure. It is important that these requirements do not undermine the deliverability of the Local Plan. For sites allocated in the Local Plan, this means it must be demonstrated that the cumulative cost of all policy requirements are not such that it would be unviable to develop that site.

We will be commissioning viability evidence to support the Local Plan. A whole Plan Viability Assessment will test the combined viability effect of proposed planning policies. The aim is to demonstrate that the deliverability of the planned development will not be undermined, and to avoid the need for further viability assessments at later planning application stage. This work will need to take account of the review of the council's CIL Charging Schedules.

Despite undertaking viability work on typical types of development, there may be unforeseen circumstances or specific site issues which mean if an applicant was to follow all the policy requirements then a development would be unviable. Government guidance highlights that when this happens the onus is on applicants to provide evidence by way of a Viability Assessment at planning application stage. Where applicants set out that a proposal will not be viable, we propose to continue to seek Viability Assessments and scrutinise these.

## Issue: Telecommunications and digital infrastructure provision

**Recommendation: We propose to support proposals for telecommunications or radio equipment where they have an acceptable visual impact on the locality.**

The government acknowledges that advanced, high quality and reliable communications infrastructure is essential for economic growth and social wellbeing.

National planning guidance sets out that planning policies should support the expansion of electronic communications networks, including 5G and full fibre broadband. We therefore propose to support telecommunications and radio equipment where it has an acceptable visual impact on the local area.

The Covid-19 pandemic has highlighted the importance of having fully functional, high-capacity digital networks and systems in place to enable working from home. BCP Council's Smart Place initiative [www.bcp council.gov.uk/News/News-Features/Smart-Place/Smart-Place.aspx](http://www.bcp council.gov.uk/News/News-Features/Smart-Place/Smart-Place.aspx) is creating digital solutions to improve the lives of residents, the vibrancy of communities and the prospects of local businesses. This involves identifying and solving digital technology challenges to help businesses be more competitive and to help people work from home if they need to. Reliable, high-speed digital connectivity, both fibre and wireless, enables businesses to be more productive.

## Issue: Community facilities and services

**Recommendation: We propose to protect existing community facilities and services, unless it can be demonstrated that they are no longer needed or can be provided elsewhere in an accessible location to serve that community.**

In addition to the provision of new infrastructure, the Local Plan will also need to ensure that established facilities and services are not lost to other uses where they continue to be required by the community. Government policy requires us to guard against the unnecessary loss of valued facilities and services, particularly where this would reduce a community's ability to meet its day-to-day needs. We are therefore proposing to protect existing community facilities and services, unless it can be demonstrated they are no longer needed or can be provided elsewhere in an accessible location to serve that community.

Community facilities include sports centres, swimming pools, community halls, health facilities, private specialist sports clubs, local shops which fall into the new 'Use Class F2' - (a) (shops mostly selling essential goods, including food, where the shop's premises do not exceed 280 sqm and there is no other such facility within 1000 metres), youth centres, schools, cultural facilities, places of worship, public houses and allotments. These facilities have a wide range of benefits including improving health, reducing health inequalities, providing social interaction and community cohesion.

Where large, strategic developments are proposed, additional community facilities may be required. We will examine this alongside our final list of site allocations.

We are reviewing all of our existing sports facilities and working with Sport England, national governing bodies of sport and other agencies to improve sport and physical activity provision. Our evidence suggests that additional provision may be needed in key areas such as additional football pitches (potentially through new 3G pitches) and new swimming pool space. We will be looking at opportunities to provide additional 3G sports pitches as part of our existing sports centres and facilities. The provision of new swimming space is a particular issue in Poole town centre, where the Dolphin swimming pool is coming to the end of its lifespan. A particular aspiration for the regeneration of Poole town centre is to ensure the Dolphin Leisure Centre is upgraded or replaced.

## 5.0 Conclusion

Thank you for taking the time to read this consultation document. Your views on this document will help shape the draft of the Local Plan for Bournemouth, Christchurch and Poole.

The draft Local Plan will be prepared during 2022 and will be subject to a further period of consultation before it is submitted to the Secretary of State for examination.

### How to get involved

To respond please visit: [haveyoursay.bcp council.gov.uk/localplan](http://haveyoursay.bcp council.gov.uk/localplan).

Here you can view our interactive version of this document and access all the consultation materials.

**Please respond by March 25 2022**

## 6.0 References

[Existing Local Plans](#) via this link you can find the existing planning documents for the Bournemouth, Christchurch and Poole area, including all the Supplementary Planning Documents.

[Evidence base](#) via this link you can find our emerging evidence base which includes.

- BCP Housing Needs Study
- BCP Housing Needs Sensitivity Report
- Housing and Economic Land Availability Assessment
- BCP Retail and Leisure Study
- Strategic Green Belt Assessment
- Strategic Flood Risk Assessment
- Sustainability Appraisal Scoping Report
- Habitat Regulation Scoping Report
- Local Transport Plan 3
- South East Dorset Urban Mobility Strategy
- BCP Green Infrastructure Strategy

[BCP Big Plan](#)

[National Planning Policy Framework](#)

[Planning Practice Guidance](#)

[National Design Guide](#)

