

Core Strategy Development Plan Document

Preferred Options



Foreword

New Forest District Council needs to set out its planning policies for the next 20 years for the areas outside the National Park. The District is a very special place for all who live here and our future plans have to address the needs for housing and employment whilst ensuring the quality of our natural and built environment is not compromised. This document - the Core Strategy - sets out how the Council proposes to meet this challenge. A number of Options are considered, and we now put these before you for your comments.

In drawing up this Core Strategy Preferred Options document, New Forest District Council has worked closely with partner organisations including the National Park Authority, and with local communities and agencies. This document has been endorsed for consultation by the New Forest Local Strategic Partnership. We asked you for your views about the future of the area some months ago (the Future Matters consultation). Many of you responded, and your ideas and opinions as to what you thought is important have helped us to put together a strategy for planning the areas outside the Park for the next 20 years. We have looked at various ways of meeting the local needs that you identified, along with the regional and national requirements with which we have to comply, and we have come up with some preferred options. We should now like your comments on all these options, and whether you agree with the Council's preferred way ahead.

We look forward to working together to keep this area special and to meet the needs of those who live and work here. We look forward to hearing from you!

Councillor Chris Treleaven

Planning and Transportation Portfolio Holder

- i. The Core Strategy DPD Preferred Options is published for a period of 6 weeks public consultation. **The consultation period will begin on 29th October 2007 and will end on 10th December 2007.**
- ii. Comments are invited on the Preferred Options and the other options considered. A form is available for making comments, which can be obtained from the Policy & Plans Team, and from the Council's website www.newforest.gov.uk

Comments should be sent to:

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All comments will be made public.

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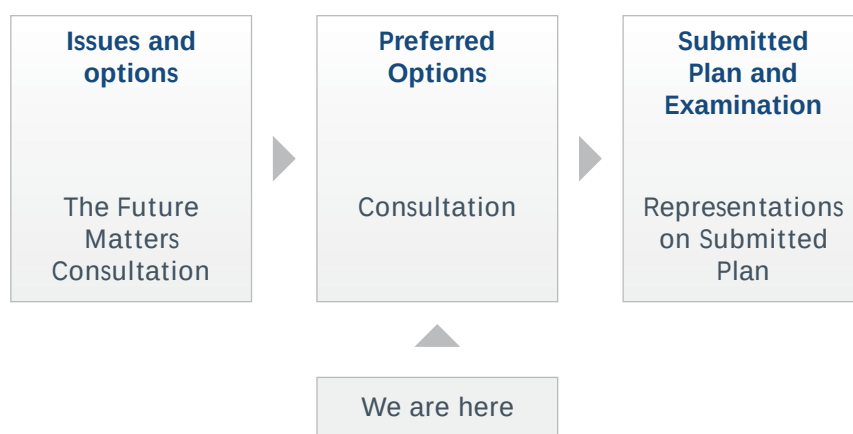
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1. Introduction

What is the “Core Strategy”?

- 1.1 This consultation document sets out New Forest District Council's strategy for the future planning of the area outside the National Park over the next 20 years or so.
- 1.2 The Core Strategy is the key part of the Local Development Framework, which will comprise a series of Development Plan and Supplementary Planning Documents to guide the spatial planning of the area. Other documents, which will include more detailed “Sites Designations and Allocations” and “Development Control Policies”, will need to comply with the Core Strategy. The programme for the preparation of these documents is set out in New Forest District Council's Local Development Scheme (revised April 2007).
- 1.3 Initially, New Forest District Council and the National Park Authority were working jointly on a Core Strategy for their combined areas. However in June 2007 the National Park Authority decided that it wished to work to a slower programme and not to continue with the joint Core Strategy. Close working is continuing to ensure that as far as possible the Core Strategies for the District outside and inside the National Park are consistent with each other.
- 1.4 This consultation document sets out the Council's “Preferred Options” for the Core Strategy but also refers to other options considered. Responses are invited on the full range of options set out in this consultation document.
- 1.5 Figure 1 shows where we are in the process. A summary of the full process for preparing the Core Strategy is included in Appendix 1.

Fig. 1: The Core Strategy Process



Relationship to Community Strategy and other strategies

- 1.6** The Core Strategy needs to be related to all other relevant strategies that have implications for the development and use of land. There is a particularly strong relationship with the New Forest District Community Strategy, which seeks to promote the social, economic and environmental well-being of the District's residents, but other existing and emerging strategies are also relevant (e.g. housing, economy, transport, tourism, biodiversity, New Forest National Park Management Plan etc.). These are set out in Annex 3 of the draft Sustainability Appraisal Report in Appendix 11.

“Future Matters Issues and Options” and other consultations

- 1.7** Work started on preparing this Core Strategy in early 2006. Leading up to this “Preferred Options” consultation a lot of fact-finding and informal consultation has already taken place. A very important stage was the “Future Matters Issues and Options” consultation (December 2006 to January 2007). This dealt with the “Issues and Broad Options” for the combined area of the whole of New Forest District and the National Park as a basis for the Core Strategies of the District Council and National Park Authority, for the New Forest District Community Strategy Review, and for the National Park's Management Plan. This joint consultation made a lot of sense in terms of the inter-relationships between these various strategies. A large response was received to the “Future Matters Issues and Options” consultation. The comments received are summarised in Appendix 2 and have been taken into account in preparing this “Preferred Options” document. Key points are highlighted in the “You told us” boxes at various points in this document.
- 1.8** Work on an Employment Development Plan Document (DPD) in 2005 - 2006 also involved a number of public and stakeholder consultations. The key comments arising from the consultation on the “Preferred Options” consultation on the Employment DPD are summarised in Appendix 3 and have been taken into account in the Core Strategy work. This DPD was not progressed to its final stages because of a change in Government advice which indicated that the Core Strategy should be prepared first.
- 1.9** There has also been much involvement of key organisations leading up this “Preferred Options” consultation. Other organisations have been involved, related to their expertise, in the evidence-gathering and in the various assessments carried out, including:
- Sustainability Appraisal and Strategic Environmental Assessment (including involving key stakeholders in setting up the system for appraising plan options)
 - Habitat Regulations Assessment/Appropriate Assessment
 - Employment Land Review
 - Town Centres Review
 - Recreation and Open Space Review
 - Strategic Flood Risk Assessment
 - Transport Assessment
 - Housing Market Assessment
 - Affordable housing economic viability assessment
 - New Forest District Economic Profile

- Urban potential Study
- Citizens Panel Survey of Planning Issues
- Young People's Survey of Planning Issues

1.10 A full list of Background Papers related to this “Preferred Options” consultation is included in Appendix 4. All of these Background Papers are publicly available and can be seen on the District Council's website (www.newforest.gov.uk).

1.11 The teams across the District preparing Town and Village Plans have also been encouraged to feed their ideas into the emerging Core Strategy. Appendix 5 shows the progress as at September 2007. Much of this work is at an early stage and the proposals as they emerge will feed through into other Local Development Documents and future reviews of the Core Strategy as the work progresses.

What happens after this consultation?

1.12 After this consultation the proposals set out in this document will be reconsidered in the light of comments made and the Core Strategy will then be submitted to the Government for Public Examination. An independent Inspector will assess the Core Strategy against 9 tests of “soundness” as set out in Appendix 6. The draft Core Strategy has been prepared having close regard to these tests of soundness and any changes made before submission will need to ensure that the test of soundness are still met.

2. The Plan Area

2.1 This document sets out the proposals for the area of New Forest District outside the National Park as shown in Figure 2. The Plan Area comprises three separate “sub-areas” around the edges of the New Forest National Park. As would be expected, the relationship with the National Park has been a key consideration in drawing up this Core Strategy Preferred Options document.

Fig. 2: Plan Area



2.2 The main characteristics of each of the three sub-areas are outlined later in this chapter, but there are some elements which run across the whole Plan Area.

2.3 The Plan Area lies in an attractive part of southern England. It is a popular area in which to live and work, or to visit. It is generally of high environmental quality and is located in a part of southern England that is particularly rich in terms of biodiversity. The Plan Area contains many appealing towns and villages and has attractive countryside and coast. Residents of the Plan Area can enjoy the very special qualities of the adjoining New Forest National Park. The large South East Dorset and South Hampshire conurbations on either side of the Plan Area offer wider employment, shopping, social, cultural and transport facilities.

2.4 The Plan Area is characterised by a dispersed pattern of small to medium sized towns and villages around the edge of the New Forest. This is very different from the usual situation where plan areas are focussed on one or two major centres and the surrounding areas. This Core Strategy reflects the dispersed nature of the towns and villages in this Plan Area as well as the strong inter-relationships with the adjoining National Park and major conurbations.

Population

- 2.5 Some 141,000 people live in the Plan Area. The population of the Plan Area is expected to fall over the next 20 years (see Figure 3), even though the number of households will increase. This is because of the ongoing reduction in household size. People are increasingly living by themselves (especially as they live to an older age - see Figure 4). Over 25% of the Plan Area's population is over 65, and this is expected to increase to 33% by 2026; there are predicted to be concomitant reductions in the proportions of the younger age groups, in particular those of working age. The southern coastal towns area is particularly attractive as a retirement location.

Fig. 3: Projected Population of the Plan Area 2001-2026

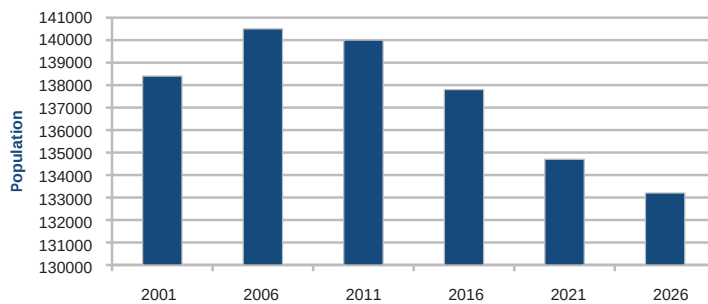
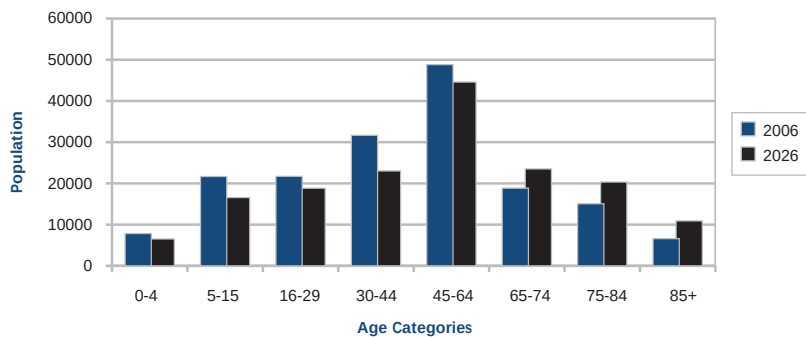
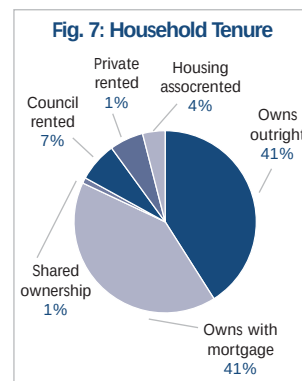
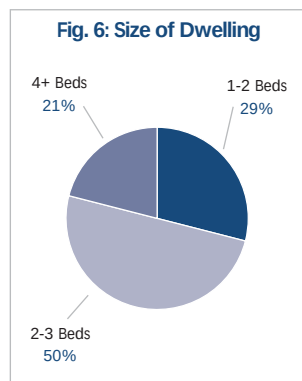
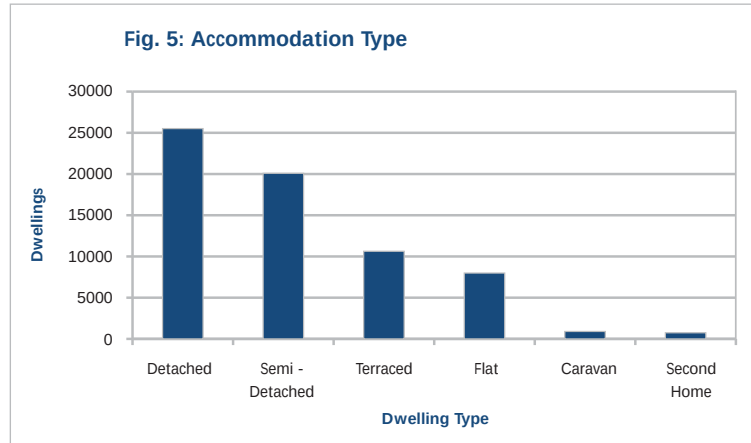


Fig. 4: Projected Age Structure 2006 & 2026



Housing

- 2.6 There are currently some 64,000 dwellings in the Plan Area. Figs. 5 to 7 show the types, sizes and tenures of the housing stock.



- 2.7 House prices are high and many of those entering the housing market throughout the Plan Area struggle to find affordable properties to rent or buy. A Housing Market Assessment has been undertaken (Background Paper BP16) which indicates a very substantial degree of need. The house price:income ratio for the District has reached 11:1, and there are almost 5400 households on the District Council's Homesearch Register (July 2007), with need focused on all the larger towns: in Totton and the Waterside, Lymington, New Milton, Ringwood and Fordingbridge areas. The Housing Market Assessment shows that the housing market sub-areas within the District (which equate to the three parts of the District covered by this Core Strategy) are relatively self-contained, in that few people choose to move from one to another.

Employment

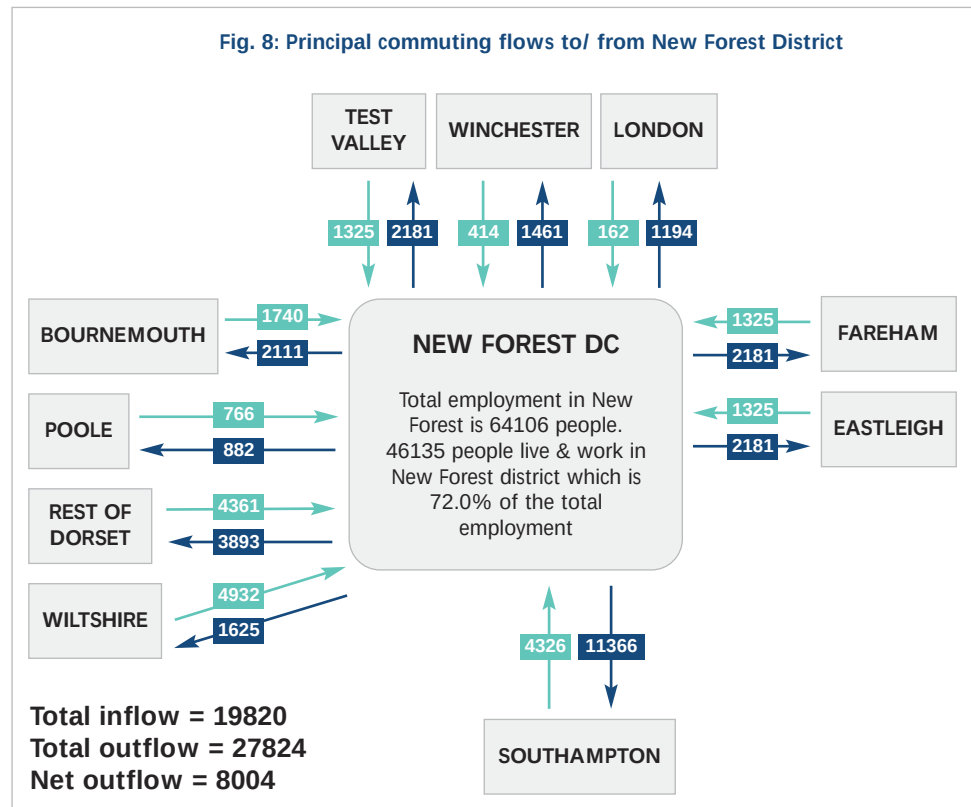
- 2.8 While unemployment in the Plan Area continues to be low in comparative terms, the economic profile is weighted towards lower paid employment in the distribution, hotel and restaurant, recreational and related service sectors. The broadly termed sectors of "high-tech and knowledge-intensive" employment, which attract higher wages, are particularly under represented.

2.9 There are some 50,000 jobs in the Plan Area. While most of the economically active population who live in the Plan Area also work in the Plan Area, there are large daily commuting flows to the adjoining conurbations - Figure 8 shows commuting flows to and from the whole of New Forest District (including the National Park). Despite the level of out-commuting, some local employers find it difficult to fill their vacancies, particularly as local house prices are high. The economically active population living in the Plan Area is expected to fall in the future.

2.10 The shortage of young people in the New Forest economy is a particular concern - the 16-44 age group is relatively under-represented. These people need an incentive to remain in or return to the District, particularly by high wage jobs that will enable them to compete in the housing market.

2.11 The research carried out (see in particular Background Papers BP6, BP7, BP9 and BP10) indicates that:

- the local economy is under-performing in terms of GVA per head although economic and employment growth is keeping pace with the county average (see Background Paper BP6);
- there is a perceived need for more land to meet the expansion needs of local employers, but it is not easy to identify how much. The take-up rate of available business premises is high. There appears to be a decreasing supply of new light industrial premises (class B1) in recent years;
- the work force is skewed towards jobs that are generally considered to be lower skilled occupations, and is relatively poorly qualified;
- there is a high level of entrepreneurship, with a healthy growth of business start-ups, an above-average proportion of self-employed workers and a high business density in terms of the number of people employed in small firms. An increased level of home-working is evident;
- the high quality of the local environment is a significant factor both for the local tourist economy, which employs a large number of people in the plan area, and in attracting enterprises that benefit from such a location - there are clear links between environmental quality and the health of both the rural economy and the economy generally;
- in terms of attracting economic development, the District neither could nor should try to compete with the large-scale business activities of the Southampton and Bournemouth areas, but could instead try to attract and develop niche sector industries such as those based on knowledge-derived creative design and marketing activities, for example applied science and environmental technologies, architectural, artistic and media industries, and marine and port-related industries;
- such knowledge-based enterprises should thereby lead to increased local wage levels, although this will need locally based investment in improvement of workforce skills and qualifications.



2.12 However, the Housing Market Assessment (Background Paper BP16) provides an important note of caution that increasing employment in the area would risk further overheating the local housing market (if the consequent labour requirement could not be met from currently resident people).

Community facilities

2.13 Appendix 7 sets out the range of facilities in the Plan Area's main towns and villages:

- The larger settlements have primary schools and all the towns have secondary schools. There are sixth-form colleges at Totton (and Brockenhurst, which is in the National Park and therefore outside the plan area), which also include some provision for adult education.
- Most settlements have local surgeries; there are small hospitals at Fordingbridge and Hythe, and there is a new larger hospital at Lymington. There are no current plans to provide new surgeries / major medical facilities.
- Totton, Hythe & Dibden, Lymington, New Milton and Ringwood all contain a good range of indoor and outdoor sports facilities; other settlements also include outdoor sports facilities.

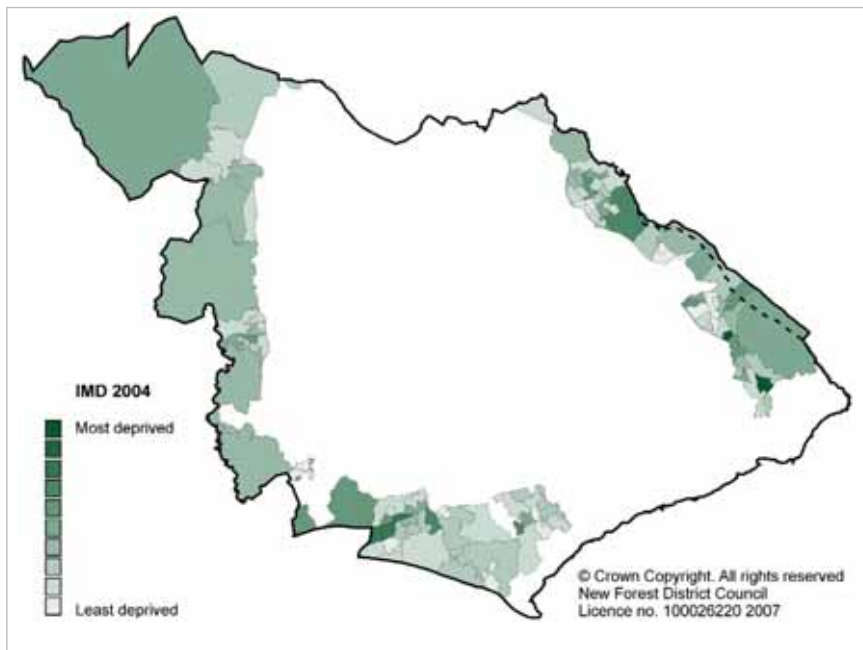
Built environment and heritage

- 2.14** The built environment is of mixed age and quality, but parts of it are of considerable historic interest. The Plan Area includes 21 Conservation Areas (including Lymington, Ringwood, Hythe, Fordingbridge and Milford-on-Sea centres) and 925 listed buildings and a number of Scheduled Ancient Monuments. There are numerous sites and areas of archaeological interest, and the plan area contains one site on the English Heritage Register of Parks and Gardens of Special Historic Interest, and a further eight identified as being of historic interest.
- 2.15** Parts of the towns and villages have acquired a character that is valued locally, for example because of their spacious nature and mature gardens, and/ or the quality and character of their buildings and landscape features which, while not of special historic or architectural interest, nevertheless provide an attractive living environment.

Deprivation

- 2.16** While the general picture is of an attractive and reasonably affluent area, which this Core Strategy needs to ensure is protected and enhanced, the Plan Area is not without social problems that also need to be addressed. Some parts of the Plan Area are far from affluent. For example, in the 2004 Indices of Deprivation (see Figure 9) Holbury & North Blackfield ward was ranked overall in the most deprived 20% of wards nationally.

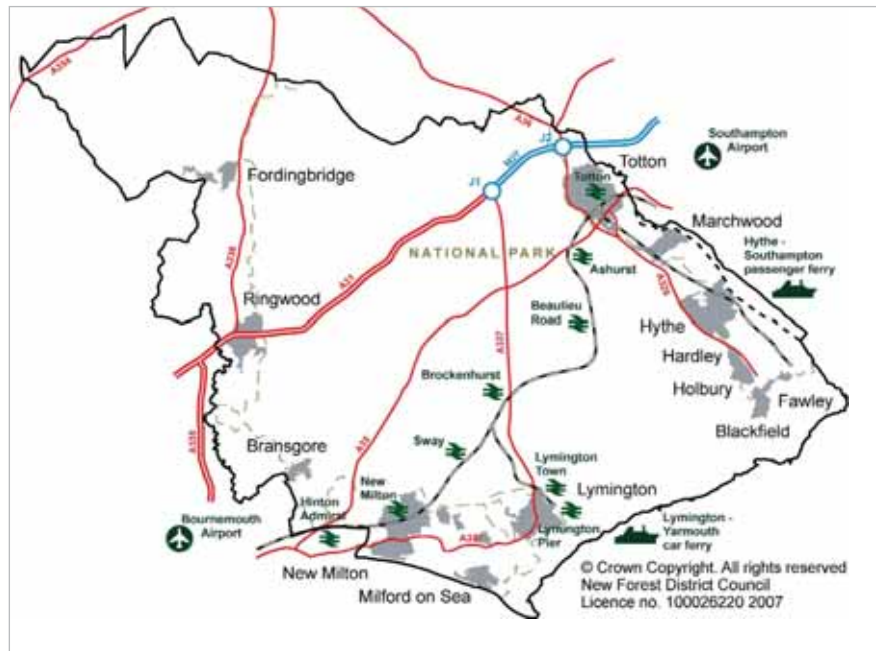
Fig. 9: Indices of Deprivation



Transport

2.17 Totton and the Waterside gain access principally from the M27, A326, A36 and A35 (as shown on Figure 10). The southern coastal towns gain access from the A337 and the A35, both of which involve crossing the New Forest National Park. The Avon Valley is accessed from the A31, which also crosses the National Park, and from the A338. The main London Waterloo - Weymouth railway crosses the District; outside the National Park, the main stations are at Totton and New Milton. A branch line from Brockenhurst also serves Lymington. There are ferry services to the Isle of Wight from Lymington, and to Southampton from Hythe. The more populated parts of the Core Strategy area are also served by an extensive network of bus routes, but services to more rural areas are limited and much of the area lacks evening and Sunday services altogether. Bournemouth and Southampton airports are close to the Plan Area, providing an increasing number of air connections to UK and mainland European designations.

Fig. 10: Transport Routes



2.18 There are no current definite proposals for major improvements to the Plan Area's transport infrastructure, although there are safeguardings for various possible improvements in the longer term (described later in paragraphs 6.90 to 6.102). Some of the major transport issues affecting the Plan Area could only be resolved by actions outside the Plan Area (e.g. congestion problems at Lyndhurst).

2.19 Parts of the District, in particular the southern part of the Waterside and the southern coastal area, are perceived as having poor access for commercial development. The coastal nature of the district, bounded as it is by the sea to the east and south, is also considered to restrict demand from businesses, although there is a benefit for marine sectors (port and yachting activities).

The three separate parts of the Plan Area

2.20 The Plan area falls into three distinct geographical areas, each of which has a different character (see Figure 2 above).

Totton and the Waterside

2.21 The Totton and Waterside area lies east of the New Forest, between the National Park and Southampton Water:

- much of this narrow strip is intensively developed, with some 68,600 people living in this area, mostly in the towns and villages of:
 - Totton 28,300
 - Marchwood 5,800
 - Hythe and Dibden 20,400
 - Fawley, Hardley, Holbury, Blackfield, & Langley 14,300
- there are also substantial employment areas in Totton and the Waterside, including substantial industrial estates at Totton and Marchwood, and the large petrochemical refinery at Fawley.
- the main shopping centres are at Totton and, to a lesser extent, Hythe, supplemented by two out-of-centre superstores at west Totton and at Dibden and various local shopping centres and parades which serve day-to-day needs.
- the open areas between the main settlements, linking from the National Park to the coast are considered locally to be very important to the settlement structure.
- most of the coast is designated as of national and international nature conservation importance - this includes Dibden Bay which was subject to a proposal for a new container port, rejected by the Secretary of State in 2004 following a long public inquiry.
- the River Test Valley, at the northern end of this part of the Plan Area, is subject to national and international nature conservation designations.
- there are large traffic flows into and out of the Waterside area with the A326 being heavily congested at peak times; proposals to open up the branch railway (currently freight only) for passenger traffic have not so far been implemented; the Hythe - Southampton Ferry provides an important public transport link.
- Totton and the Waterside are included in the "South Hampshire" sub-region in the South East Plan for which the PUSH (Partnership for Urban South Hampshire) group of local authorities have prepared a strategy for economic regeneration-led growth.

The southern coastal strip

2.22 South of the National Park lies a substantial area between the New Forest and Coast:

- in which 49,000 people live, mainly in the towns and villages of:
 - Lymington 14,600
 - Hordle & Everton 5,400
 - Milford-on-Sea 4,600
 - New Milton and Barton-on-Sea 24,200

- the main centres for shopping and other services are New Milton and Lymington, with a significant local centres at Milford-on-Sea, and smaller local provision elsewhere including Ashley, Hordle, Everton, and Pennington.
- nearly all of the land outside the defined towns and villages is designated as Green Belt.
- there are employment estates at Lymington, outside Lymington at Gordleton Pit, at New Milton, and smaller pockets of employment elsewhere.
- the coastal strip is a popular retirement area and a high proportion of the population is over retirement age.
- in recent years there has been a substantial amount of redevelopment at higher densities in New Milton and Lymington and there is concern among local residents about the affect this is having on the character of the towns.
- to access the coastal strip from the north involves crossing the New Forest, through Lyndhurst and Brockenhurst which are badly congested at times and/or through unfenced Forest roads. The main towns are served by rail.
- most of the coast in this area is accessible to the public. Much of the coast is designated as of national nature conservation importance, with a small area of international importance east of Milford-on-Sea. The soft fossil-bearing cliffs at Barton-on-Sea are of international geological importance. Coastal erosion is a major issue.

Ringwood, Fordingbridge, the Avon Valley and the Western Downlands

2.23 The third part of the Plan Area lies north and west of the National Park:

- some 25,000 people live in this area, principally in:

- Ringwood	13,600
- Fordingbridge, Ashford & Sandleheath	6,400
- Bransgore	4,200
- the main shopping centres are at Ringwood and, to a lesser extent, Fordingbridge, complemented by limited local shops elsewhere.
- the Avon Valley is of international importance to wildlife, particularly birds. Large sections of it have national and international nature conservation designations. The Avon Valley lies between the New Forest and the Dorset Heathlands. Much of the valley floor is high grade agricultural land. To the north of Ringwood is a significant area of sand and gravel deposits, much of which is being worked and in mostly being transformed into lakes.
- the rolling chalk downlands in the north-west of the District are part of the Cranborne Chase and West Wiltshire Downs Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty. This offers a marked contrast to the landscapes of the New Forest. It includes the villages of Damerham, Martin, Rockbourne and and Whitsbury, all of which are Conservation Areas.
- in recent years, the amount of new development in this area has been less than in either Totton and the Waterside or the coastal strip.
- the land to the south of Ringwood is designated Green Belt, although there are two areas adjoining Ringwood excluded from the Green Belt and safeguarded for possible longer term development.
- there is no rail service to this area. Road connections to the main towns are good but there are problems within the towns of traffic through historic centres.

Relationship with surrounding areas

2.24 The Plan Area is by no means a self-contained area. What happens in the plan area affects the adjoining areas and the plan area is very much affected by the adjoining areas (see Figure 2 above). The inter-relationships both with the National Park and with the neighbouring authorities are key matters to take on board in drawing up and implementing this Core Strategy. Close working relationships with other local authorities, the National Park Authority and other partners will continue to be essential.

Relationship with adjoining conurbations

2.25 To the east of the Plan area lies the heavily urbanised South Hampshire area. To the west lies the Bournemouth/Poole/Christchurch conurbation. These adjoining areas provide major opportunities for the residents of the Plan Area particularly for employment, shopping and other services. But these adjoining cities and towns add to pressures on the Plan Area, particularly for housing and through additional traffic.

2.26 Further major growth is planned in South Hampshire and in South East Dorset in their respective regional and sub-regional plans. In South Hampshire, the submitted South East Plan proposes an additional 80,000 new dwellings and 2 million sq. m. of employment 2006 - 2026; in South East Dorset, the submitted South West Plan proposes approximately 31,100 - 34,400 dwellings and 42,000 jobs over the same period. New Forest DC is a member of the Partnership for Urban South Hampshire (PUSH). PUSH is driven by the desire to ensure that the necessary economic growth in south Hampshire to allow quality jobs and a good standard of living is matched by the need to secure significant investment in infrastructure for government and developers to bring about a bright present and an even brighter future for all its residents - existing or to come.

Relationship to the New Forest National Park

2.27 All three parts of the Plan Area adjoin the New Forest National Park and are very closely linked to it in various ways including:

- Recreation - Many local residents use areas within the National Park for recreation. While it is a National Park purpose to encourage outdoor recreation, this needs careful management as parts of the New Forest are vulnerable to visitor intrusion, in particular because of their nature conservation value (a substantial part of the National Park is designated of national and international importance for nature conservation reasons);
- Transport - the transport network serving the Plan Area is intrinsically linked with the transport network of the National Park;
- Noise, light and air quality - uses outside the National Park can have an impact on it, although it has to be taken into account that the National Park lies in a heavily-populated areas of South-east England rather than in a remote and tranquil part of the country;
- Back-up grazing land - some areas outside the National Park are a source of back-up grazing land, which supports the commoning activity that is of major importance to the landscape quality and cultural heritage of the National Park;

- Setting - some sites adjoining the edge of the National Park are important to its setting;
- Community and cultural links - there remain close between communities outside the National Park and those within it, and many people living in the Plan Area identify with the “New Forest” as being the area where they live.

2.28 This Core Strategy needs to have regard to Section 62 of the Environment Act which places a duty on authorities adjoining a National Park to have regard to National Park purposes in undertaking their statutory duties. The two main purposes, as set out in the Environment Act 1995, are:

- (i) to conserve and enhance the natural beauty, wildlife and cultural heritage of the Park; and
- (ii) to promote opportunities for the understanding and enjoyment of its special qualities.

2.29 In addition, the National Park has a duty to foster the social and economic well-being of communities within it. This duty also has implications for this Core Strategy.

3. National and Regional context

- 3.1** The local Core Strategy is expected to conform to national and regional policy unless there are exceptional local reasons for not doing so.
- 3.2** National planning policy and guidance is set out in a series of Planning Policy Statements (PPSs) and Planning Policy Guidance Notes (PPGs) (see Appendix 8). The Core Strategy does not need to repeat national planning policy but rather it needs to explain the way in which National Policy will be applied to the Plan Area (e.g. where will the Green Belt be?).
- 3.3** The adopted regional planning policy is set out in “Regional Planning Guidance 9: The South East” but by the time that the New Forest District Core Strategy is adopted it is expected that revised regional planning policy will be set out in an adopted South East Plan. A draft South East Plan prepared by the South East Regional Assembly was considered at an Examination in Public (EiP) between October 2006 and March 2007. The EiP Panel reported in July 2007. The Government is expected to issue proposed modifications in late 2007. This Preferred Options document has been drawn up to conform to the submitted South East Plan, having regard to the recommendations of the EiP Panel.
- 3.4** The adopted South East Plan will form part of the statutory Development Plan, as will the Core Strategy, so the Core Strategy does not need to repeat the policies and proposals in the South East Plan. The Core Strategy needs to show how the specific proposal in the South East Plan that apply to this Plan Area will be delivered. Key proposals in the submitted South East Plan that directly affect this Plan Area include:
- an additional 4,138 dwellings in New Forest District 2006-2026 [broken down into a requirement of 1,538 dwellings in Totton and the Waterside, and 2,600 dwellings in the rest of the District (and the whole of the New Forest National Park area)].
 - the need for policies in Local Development Documents to deliver a substantial increase in the amount of affordable housing;
 - keeping the Green Belt south and west of the National Park, but with possible detailed boundary revisions in response to local development needs;
 - a Strategic Gap between Totton and Southampton, but no other Strategic Gaps in the Plan Area;
 - developing supportive sustainable land management policies within the zone of “New Forest commoning activity”, including protection of grazing land outside the National Park which is needed to support National Park purposes;
 - priority to conservation and enhancement of natural beauty in the region's Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty (which include the part of the Cranborne Chase and West Wiltshire Downs AONB in the north west of the Plan Area).

4. The Key Issues

4.1 The Core Strategy must be a response to the specific key issues facing the Plan Area. This chapter sets out 14 Key Strategic Issues that the Core Strategy must deal with if it is to be successful - not in any order of importance and inevitably with some overlap between Issues. The list of Key Issues below has been distilled in the main from:

- the specific “evidence-gathering” carried out in preparing this Core Strategy (see Appendix 4 for list of published Background Papers);
- the formal and informal consultations carried out over the last couple of years in working towards this “Preferred Options” document (including “Future Matters Issues and Options” - see Appendix 2, and the “Employment DPD” consultations - see Appendix 3); and
- the accumulated experience over the years of planning for New Forest District.

Key Issue 1 - Housing Needs

How can the Core Strategy best provide for housing needs in an area where house prices are very high and unaffordable to most local residents trying to access the housing market for the first time, and where opportunities for new development are severely limited by environmental constraints?

Key Issue 2 - Local Economy

How can the Core Strategy best provide for the needs of the local economy, keep an adequate supply of employment land for local businesses, and help improve local wage levels, while recognising that the economically active population of the Plan Area is forecast to decline and where opportunities for new development are severely limited by environmental constraints?

Key Issue 3 - Climate change

How can the Core Strategy respond to the issues of climate change: including both dealing with the consequences (including rising sea levels) and minimising the harmful impacts from within the Plan Area?

Key Issue 4 - Character of towns and villages

How can the Core Strategy best protect and enhance the character of the Plan Area's towns and villages and ensure that new development makes a positive contribution to improving the character?

Key Issue 5 - Healthy town and village centres

How can the Core Strategy help ensure the continued viability and vitality of the town and village centres as local providers of shopping and other needs, in the face of major competition from major centres outside (but close to) the Plan area and where service -providers wish to centralise services?

Key Issue 6 - Contributing to PUSH Strategy

How can the Core Strategy contribute to the economic regeneration of the South Hampshire sub-region?

Key Issue 7 - Countryside and rural economy

How can the Core Strategy help protect and enhance the countryside, which of mostly of high environmental quality; help maintain local housing and employment opportunities and local services for those living there; and ensure a thriving rural economy?

Key Issue 8 - Impacts on the National Park

How can the Core Strategy ensure that its proposals avoid significant harmful impacts on the New Forest National Park?

Key Issue 9: Biodiversity

How can the Core Strategy ensure that biodiversity in the Plan Area and in adjoining areas is protected and enhanced?

Key Issue 10 - Transport

How can the Core Strategy maintain safe and convenient access to services, employment and social and leisure opportunities while minimising the need to travel by private car, recognising the rural nature of much of the Plan Area and the limited availability of public transport?

Key Issue 11 - Ageing population

How can the Core Strategy deal with the consequences of an ageing population, recognising that parts of the Plan Area are very attractive retirement locations?

Key Issue 12 - Infrastructure and local services

How can the Core Strategy help ensure adequate provision of infrastructure and local services, which in some cases have lagged behind growth, in a new context where a reduction in local population levels forecast?

Key Issue 13 - Leisure and recreation

How can the Core Strategy ensure adequate provision for leisure and recreation (including open space) in locations that will avoid damage to sensitive environments?

Key Issue 14 - Tourism and visitors

How can the Core Strategy encourage sustainable tourism that will benefit the local economy without harming the special qualities of the area?

5. The Plan's Vision and Objectives

- 5.1** In response to the Key Issues identified in Chapter 4, this section sets out a proposed “vision” for the Core Strategy (i.e. how we would like the Plan area to be seen in about 20 years time) and a proposed set of Plan Objectives (used to test whether the policies and proposals will help achieve the vision). The Vision and Objectives are closely related to the proposed vision and objectives of New Forest District Council's Community Strategy Review (see Appendix 9) but focus on the spatial aspects.

Core Strategy Vision Statement

- 5.2** By 2026, the towns and villages in the Plan area will provide for the social, economic and community needs of all residents, securing healthy, fulfilled and safe lifestyles. The character and attraction of the towns and villages will have been protected and wherever possible enhanced. There will have been no major changes to the existing hierarchy of towns and villages, with Totton, New Milton, Lymington, Ringwood, Hythe, Fordingbridge and the larger villages each fulfilling a role appropriate to the size of the community and its character. The tensions and pressures on the Plan area will have been managed in such a way that the area's special qualities that make the area distinct remain strong, but also in ways that have maximized the opportunities for the needs of the local population to be met. The effects of an ageing and declining population will have been managed in a way that strives to secure a balanced population age structure and maximizes opportunities for a full and healthy lifestyle for all of the District's residents, including young people as well as the more elderly.
- 5.3** The relationship with the adjoining areas, including the major conurbations in South Hampshire and South East Dorset and the National Park, will have been managed to the mutual benefit of all areas, in order to provide maximum opportunities for fulfilling lives while respecting the different attributes of the different areas. Any changes in the Plan area will have respected the natural beauty, wildlife and cultural heritage of the adjoining New Forest National Park. The communities living around the National Park will continue to have a strong identity with the National Park.
- 5.4** The New Forest offers an almost unparalleled quality of life that could be used as an economic asset to attract and retain high value added businesses that are largely lacking at present. There will be opportunities for local businesses to thrive and new smaller scale businesses to set up in order to provide opportunities for better paid jobs for local residents, but in ways that reflect and complement the special qualities and attractions of the Plan area and the adjoining National Park, and without promoting employment growth that would put unacceptable pressures on the local housing market. There will be a diverse rural economy supporting strong and sustainable rural communities.
- 5.5** New housing development will have been directed towards meeting the needs of local people in the towns and villages. Opportunities for local people to find affordable living accommodation will have been maximized, recognizing that

within an area of such high attraction to in-migrants it will not be possible for all housing demands to be met without damaging the qualities that make the area so special.

- 5.6 The likely effects of climate change will have been assessed and become widely understood, and the area will be playing its full part in minimizing damage to the planet; and measures to adapt, and where appropriate, to protect from or take advantage of these changes, will be in place and being further developed.
- 5.7 Transport opportunities will realistically reflect the dispersed nature of the area's settlements and the travel needs of rural residents, but within this context the need to travel, and adverse impacts of traffic on the adjoining National Park, will have been minimised.

Core Strategy Objectives

- 5.8 The proposed strategic objectives for the Core Strategy (not in any order of importance) are:

1. Special qualities, local distinctiveness and a high quality living environment

To provide for a high quality, safe and attractive living environment for communities in both urban and rural areas in a way that respects and safeguards the special qualities, character and local distinctiveness of the Plan area and the adjoining New Forest National Park.

2. Climate Change and Environmental Sustainability

To minimise the impact of local factors contributing to climate change, including minimising the use of non-renewable energy and natural resources; and to assess the implications on the Plan area of climate change and develop appropriate local responses that minimise any harmful local impacts.

3. Housing

To provide for additional housing within the Plan area to meet at least the requirements of the submitted South East Plan for New Forest District and National Park (4138 additional dwellings 2006-2026 which is equivalent to 207 additional dwellings a year) and to ensure that new housing provision is as far as possible directed towards addressing local housing needs, in terms of type, tenure and location, and in particular the needs of local people for housing which is affordable.

4. Economy

To foster the well-being of the local economy, facilitating a healthy and growing local economy without fuelling wider development pressures in the area. To support economic growth that reflects and complements the District's specific qualities and advantages, in particular tourism and low impact, higher paid knowledge-based enterprises. To support the economic regeneration of town centres. To make a positive contribution to the delivery of the South East Plan's strategy for the regeneration and improved economic performance of the South Hampshire Sub-Region.

5. Travel

To reduce the need to travel, particularly using the private car and other unsustainable modes, and improve the accessibility and attractiveness of alternative transport modes. To provide safe and convenient access to services, employment, social and leisure opportunities.

6. Towns, Villages and built environment quality

To encourage, and provide for the needs of, mixed and balanced communities in the towns and villages by providing, appropriate to the size of settlement, for a range and choice of good quality housing, job opportunities, and facilities and services which help meet the needs of residents; and in the main towns to aim for a good range of facilities providing for the social, economic, shopping, leisure, community, health and educational needs of all sections of the local community. To ensure that local character and distinctiveness which is valued is maintained, that enhancements are encouraged and that new development is well designed and is appropriate in scale and character to its setting.

7. The countryside

To promote a positive future for rural areas, securing their economic prosperity and environmental and social well-being, and enabling the diversification of the rural economy in ways which are compatible with environmental and adjoining National Park aims.

8. Biodiversity and landscape

To promote and safeguard biodiversity, protection and enhancement of wildlife, and landscape quality in the Plan Area and to avoid significant harmful impacts on the adjoining National Park. To promote public education and understanding of the care and quiet enjoyment of the natural environment.

9. Leisure and recreation

To provide a range of accessible and varied opportunities for good quality leisure and recreation activities within local communities. To facilitate the enjoyment of the coast and the area's other special qualities by visitors as well as local communities. To manage recreational pressures within areas subject to environmental designations, to minimise human impacts while maintaining appropriate opportunities to enjoy and experience the special qualities of the area.

5.9 Figure 11 shows how the Plan Objectives and Policy Outlines relate to the Key Issues set out in Chapter 4. As would be expected, there is a complex relationship between the key issues and the objectives, and policy outlines are often a response to a range of key issues and objectives.

Fig. 11: Main relationships between Plan Key Issues, Objectives and Policies

Key issues	Objectives	Core Strategy Policies which pursue the objective
4,5,8,9,11,12,13	1. Special qualities, local distinctiveness and a high quality living environment	1, 3, 8, 9, 24, 25, 26, 27, 28
3,5,10	2. Climate Change and Environmental Sustainability	1, 3, 11, 13, 25, 28
1,11	3. Housing	1, 3, 4, 11, 12, 14, 15, 16, 17, 18, 25, 29
2,5,6,7,14	4. Economy	1, 3, 5, 6, 7, 10, 12, 19, 20, 21, 22, 23, 29
2,3,5,10,11,12,13	5. Travel	1, 2, 3, 10, 21, 26, 27, 29
1,2,4,5,11,12,13,14	6. Towns, Villages and built environment quality	1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 10, 12, 14, 15, 16, 17, 19, 25, 26, 27, 28, 29
7,8,9,14	7. The countryside	1, 8, 9, 15,17, 22, 23, 24, 25, 26, 27
8,9	8. Biodiversity and landscape	1, 8, 9, 13, 24, 25,
8,9,10,11,13,14	9. Leisure and recreation	1, 7, 23, 26, 29

6. Spatial Strategy

You told us:

We need to strike a balance between higher density development and protecting the character of towns even if this means some building on green field sites.

Half of you thought there was a need for some more employment development. Fewer thought there should be more general housing development, although many of you supported the idea of allocating sites for affordable housing.

We need to support the role of Lymington, New Milton, Ringwood and Totton as the main town centres and plan for additional retail development within them.

6.1 This chapter deals with the broad location of new development over the plan period (2006 - 2026). It initially focuses on the two key land uses of housing and employment and examines the realistic choices (the spatial options) for the scale of change proposed. Then, based on a comprehensive appraisal of these spatial options, it sets out the Preferred Option for housing and employment. This Preferred Option is then expanded to include:

- the strategy for new town, village and local centres;
- the implications for each of the main towns and the larger villages in the Plan Area; and finally
- the implications of the “Preferred Option” for the Green Belt and defined protective “Gaps” between settlements;

Key factors influencing the location of new development:

6.2 A range of realistic options for locations of new housing and employment development was drawn up based on the factors set out below:

(a) Sustainable development principles

6.3 New Forest District Council strongly supports the principles of “sustainable development” which are central to Government advice and to the South East Plan. An accepted definition of sustainable development is that: 'Sustainable development seeks to meet the needs and aspirations of the present without compromising the ability to meet those of the future' (Bruntland). The key aims of sustainable development as set out in Planning Policy Statement 1 are:

- social progress which recognises the needs of everyone;
- effective protection of the environment;
- the prudent use of natural resources; and,
- the maintenance of high and stable levels of economic growth and employment.

Policy Outline CS1 - Sustainable Development Locations

The Preferred Option is to promote sustainable development by ensuring that new development is located:

- predominantly in or near settlements with a good range of services and facilities, and access to alternative modes of transport
- so as to minimise risk of damage to areas of high nature conservation and/or landscape value
- so as to protect and enhance the character and quality of the local area
- so as to minimise the amount of development and people at risk from flooding or other hazards

(b) The Core Strategy vision and objectives

- 6.4** The principles of “sustainable development” are embodied in the Plan's Vision and Objectives set out in Section 5 above and these Plan Objectives have been a key element in the development and the appraisal of the spatial options.

(c) How much housing and employment development are we planning for?

HOUSING

- 6.5** Plan Objective 3: “Housing” includes “To provide for additional housing within the Plan area to meet at least the requirements of the submitted South East Plan for New Forest District and National Park (4138 additional dwellings 2006-2026 which is equivalent to 207 additional dwellings a year)”. Figure 12 below, based on the Urban Potential Study (see Background Paper BP13) shows the amount of development that is likely to take place without any new green-field allocations of land for housing development. This almost achieves the South East Plan overall requirement. The dwelling numbers in Figure 12 include a very cautious assumption (in comparison with the much higher rate in recent years) regarding the amount of development that will come forward in the towns and villages through infilling, redevelopment and conversions.

**Fig. 12: South East Plan requirement and development 2006-2026
(for whole of New Forest District including National Park)**

S E Plan requirement for housing (1)	4138 dwellings
Supply of housing land:	
Land already with permission or allocated for development (2), (3), (4):	1660 dwellings
Additional sites proposed within towns and main villages (4), (5):	346 dwellings
Small site allowance (6)	1900 dwellings
Total	3906 dwellings
Additional land needed to meet SE Plan requirement	232 dwellings

(1) This is taken from the submitted SE Plan (March 2006) and supported in the Report of the Panel (Aug.2007)

(2) Includes sites of 10 or more dwellings

(3) Includes 48 dwellings in the National Park

(4) These figures are discounted by 5% to allow for an element of non-delivery

(5) These are set out in the Urban Potential Study (Background Paper BP13)

(6) Includes 220 dwellings (11 a year) as agreed as provisional figure with the National Park Authority

6.6 The second element of Objective 3: “Housing” is “to ensure that new housing provision is as far as possible directed towards addressing local housing needs, in terms of type, tenure and location, and in particular the needs of local people for housing which is affordable”. This is a major consideration in drawing up and appraising the spatial options. Given the scale of affordable housing needs in the Plan Area, the spatial options have not been limited to the requirement of the submitted South East Plan but rather, in some cases, exceed this requirement. This has been done:

(a) in order to include spatial options that better provide for affordable housing needs; and

(b) recognising that the SE Plan is not yet adopted, to include some “contingency provision” that can be drawn on if necessary to ensure an adequate housing land supply

However, the Core Strategy should and does not exceed the SE Plan requirement to such an extent as to put it out of conformity with the SE Plan.

EMPLOYMENT

6.7 Plan Objective 4: Economy includes “To foster the well-being of the local economy, facilitating a healthy and growing local economy without fuelling wider development pressures in the area.....” The submitted SE Plan does not give any specific quantitative requirement for employment development in the Plan Area, but requires the provision of a range of sites and premises accessible by a variety of transport modes, with a focus on urban areas and the re-use of previously developed land.

- 6.8** Emerging guidance by the PUSH group of authorities [“Partnership for Urban South Hampshire”, which includes New Forest District Council] indicates that Totton and the Waterside should provide for approximately 17,000 sq.m. of offices, but there is no requirement for additional industrial or warehousing sites beyond existing sites and allocations.
- 6.9** New Forest District Council's Economic Strategy proposes to accommodate business needs by means that include bringing forward existing undeveloped allocations, and conversion of farm buildings; the development of a local economy based on small businesses, local distinctiveness, knowledge-based and low impact types of business over significant areas of the District; and possibly in some locations larger scale business development to improve local wage levels.
- 6.10** There remain a number of employment allocations and opportunities in the Plan Area that are not yet developed. These include the major sites listed in Fig.13 below. In addition there are further possible opportunities at a 5ha site on Shore Road, Hythe that has recently been vacated by its military users, and could be re-used for marine-related employment; and at land adjoining Fawley Refinery where 30ha of land is currently reserved for petrochemicals-related uses.

Fig. 13: Current employment site allocations and identified sites by sub-area

Employment sub-Area	Supply on existing identified sites	Hectares
Totton & Waterside	Cracknore Industrial Estate, Marchwood	5.11
	Hardley Industrial Estate, Hardley	1.00
	Marchwood Industrial Park, Marchwood	7.00
	Sub-Area Total	13.11
Lymington & New Milton	Ampress Park, Lymington	2.50
	East of Caird Avenue, New Milton	4.20
	Sub-Area Total	6.70
Ringwood & Fordingbridge	Christchurch Road, Ringwood	7.03
	Embankment Way, Ringwood	0.50
	Sandleheath Industrial Estate, Sandleheath	2.16
	Sub-Area Total	9.69
	West of Crow Lane, Ringwood (reserve site)	3.00

- 6.11** Employment sites and allocations within the Plan Area are constantly under pressure to be redeveloped for higher value uses, particularly housing. Without restraint, many sites, particularly smaller employment sites, would be lost which would be damaging to the local economy. The Council's Economic Strategy strongly supports the principle that employment sites are an important resource which it is necessary to retain and recycle in order to support the local economy. This is consistent with the submitted South East Plan and the Examination Panel's Recommendations (August 2007).

- 6.12** Both the South East Plan and national guidance (Employment Land Reviews: Guidance Note, ODPM 2004) advise that up to date employment land reviews should be carried out to assess whether there is a good prospect of employment use on particular sites, or whether they should be allocated for alternative uses. New Forest District Council has carried out such a review (see Background Paper BP5). This review, and subsequent evidence-gathering and consultations related to the (former) Employment Development Plan Document examined a range of options, which included keeping existing employment sites and allocations for employment use, or allowing mixed uses, or allowing the development of some existing sites and allocations for housing. This work concluded that in general existing employment sites and allocations in the Plan Area should be kept for employment uses and that only a very few small sites (specified in Policy CS5 below) should be released for other uses.
- 6.13** Assessing how much employment land is needed over the Plan period (20 years) is not easy. An assessment based on the needs of current employers is not very meaningful, as it would be unrealistic to expect employers to predict their requirements this far ahead. However, research carried out does indicate the need for more employment sites if local employers are to meet their expansion needs (see Background Papers BP7 and BP10).
- 6.14** One indication of future employment land needs is given by past rates of development (see Background Paper BP7). Figure 14 below shows the annual average past rates of development for each sub-area and the quantities of land required to continue these rates over the next 20 years.

Fig. 14: Indicative future employment land needs based on past development rates

Employment sub-Area	Annual average past rates of development 1989-2006	Land that would be required to continue past rates 2006-2026*	Additional land that would be required to continue past development rates taking account of supply in Fig.13
Totton & Waterside	6,489 sqm	32.4 hectares	+ 19.3 hectares
Lymington & New Milton	4,102 sqm	20.5 hectares	+ 13.8 hectares
Ringwood & Fordingbridge	2,767 sqm	13.8 hectares	+ 4.1 hectares (+ 1.1 ha if Crow Lane reserve site is allocated for development)

*Figures based on 40% of site area resulting in built floorspace

- 6.15** These figures should be treated with great caution however, as past rates of development have been affected by the availability of land and other economic factors. They are a very crude indicator of potential need and there are other factors which suggest that simply planning for a continuation of past rates might not be appropriate. These factors include:

- Given that there are generally low rates of unemployment across the Plan Area, and that the economically active population is expected to decline significantly (-10%) over the plan period, major additional employment development would add to housing pressures;
- Increased emphasis on retaining and reusing existing employment sites, and on attracting higher value employment uses including those which are based on office/design studio/product test areas etc, all of which tend to use land more intensively and therefore means that more employment needs could be met on existing sites;
- in neighbouring districts and within a short distance of the Plan Area boundaries there are large employment centres and developments that could also provide both employment opportunities for residents in the Plan Area, and sites for local firms (see Background Paper BP8 'Employment Allocations in Adjoining Districts').

(d) Settlement hierarchy

- 6.16** A “settlement hierarchy” is useful as a basis for distributing new development in a sustainable way, where local services will be available and the need to travel is minimised. The towns and larger villages in the Plan Area have been classified into a settlement hierarchy based on the availability within the settlement, or ease of access to, of the following services (see Appendix 7 for more detail):
- Shops (convenience goods) and Post Office
 - Leisure and community facilities
 - Education facilities
 - Health care facilities (doctors, dentists, pharmacies)
 - Local employment (ratio of economically active population to jobs in the ward within which the settlement is located)
 - Public transport.
- 6.17** Policy Outline CS2 sets out the proposed settlement hierarchy. Research carried out, and discussions with the key providers, have not indicated any known changes in services and facilities big enough to affect the settlement hierarchy set out Policy CS2, given the relatively small amount of additional development that is being planned for.
- 6.18** The towns listed in Levels 1 and 2 in Policy Outline CS2 are the most sustainable locations for most new development (consistent with their character) in terms of access to local services and facilities.
- 6.19** The villages in Level 3 have been defined previously through Local Plans as built-up areas primarily because the nature and extent of built development suggests the potential for some further small scale development within them. Most have access to local facilities and workplaces. Within these settlements, it is proposed that some development, consistent with their character, will continue.

- 6.20 The remaining settlements in Level 4 are of a dispersed, rural nature, and have limited access to facilities and workplaces. They have therefore not been identified as suitable for further development, and have not been included in defined built-up areas.

Policy Outline CS2 - Settlement Hierarchy

The proposed settlement hierarchy is:

- Level 1 - Totton & Eling, Hythe & Dibden, Lymington & Pennington, New Milton and Barton on Sea, and Ringwood are the main towns with a wide range of services and where most new development will be located.
- Level 2 - Fordingbridge is a smaller town with a limited range of services, where some new development can be accommodated.
- Level 3 - Ashford, Blackfield & Langley, Bransgore, Everton, Fawley, Hardley and Holbury, Hordle, Marchwood, Milford and Sandleheath are defined villages with local services and where limited local development may be appropriate.
- Level 4 - Breamore, Damerham, Ellingham, Harbridge, Ibsley, Martin, Rockbourne, Sopley and Whitsbury are rural villages with very limited services where only development appropriate to rural areas will be permitted.

(e) Protective designations

- 6.21 Respecting the National Park and avoiding significant harmful impacts on it is fundamental to this Core Strategy (as set out in Plan Objectives 1, 7 and 8). The Core Strategy (including the appraisal of the spatial options) has been drawn up working closely with the National Park Authority to ensure that these objectives are met.
- 6.22 Much of the Plan Area itself is also affected by statutory designations and policy constraints:
- **Special Protection Areas (SPA), Ramsar site, Special Areas of Conservation (SAC), Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI), National Nature Reserves, Local Nature Reserves, Sites of Importance for Nature Conservation (SINCs)**
- 6.23 Large parts of the Plan Area lie within or in close proximity to sites subject to statutory international, European and national nature conservation designations and local nature conservation designations (see Figures 15 and 16).

Fig. 15: Sites of International, European and/or national importance

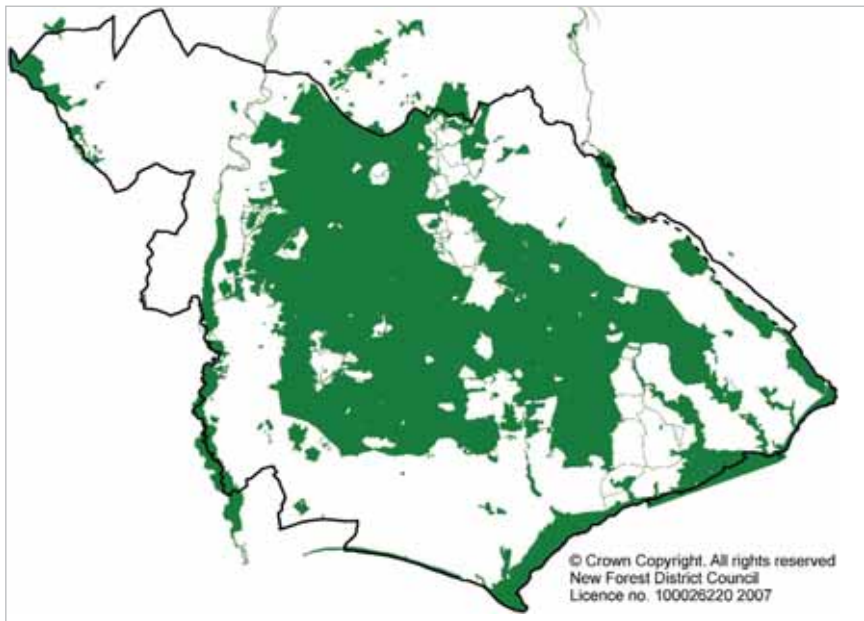
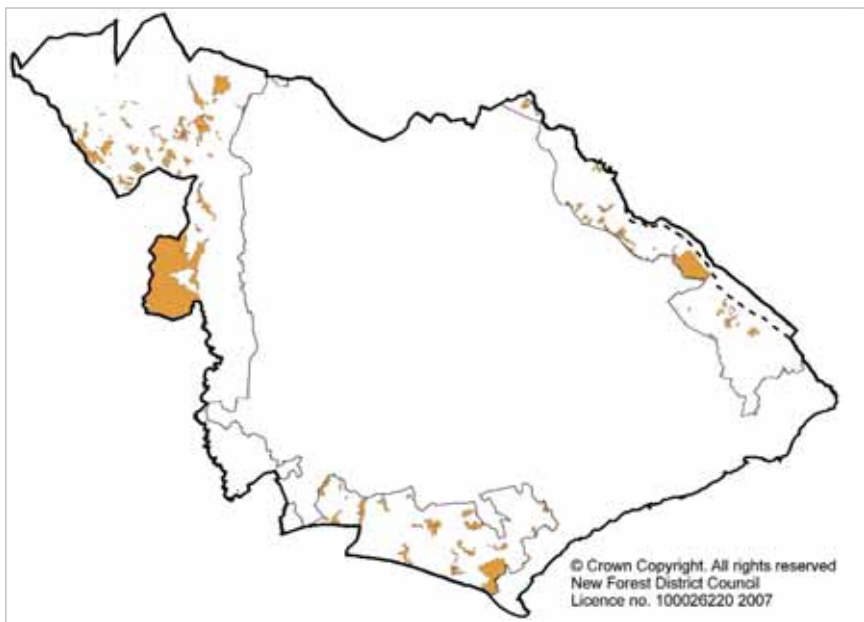


Fig. 16: Sites of Importance for Nature Conservation (local designations)



AREA OF OUTSTANDING NATURAL BEAUTY (AONB)

- 6.24** The north-west part of the District (the Western Downslands) is included within the Cranborne Chase and West Wiltshire Downs AONB (see Figure 17). Major new development would not be in line with protecting the special landscape qualities.

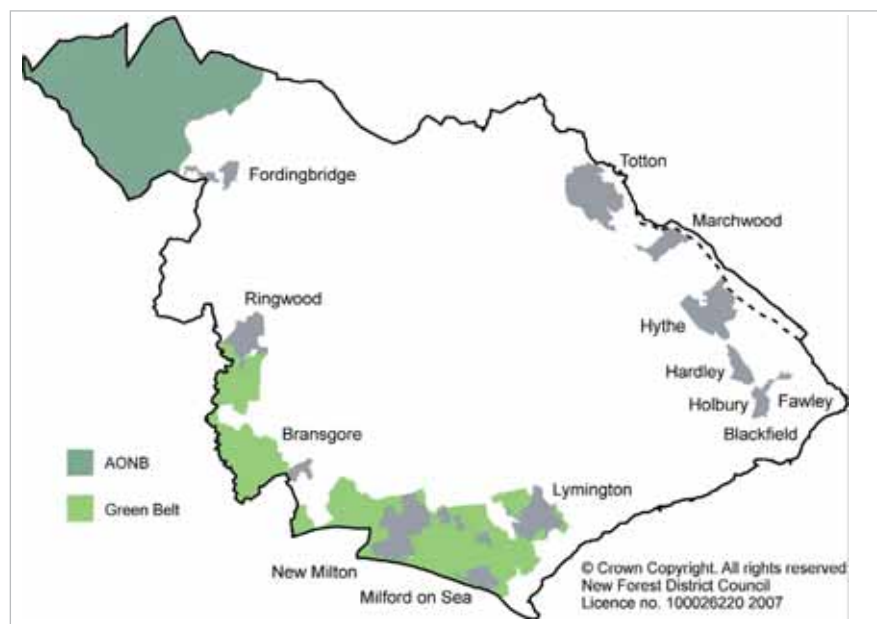
GREEN BELT

- 6.25** The southern coastal area and the southern part of the Avon Valley lie within the South West Hampshire Green Belt, which joins up with the South East

Dorset Green Belt (see Figure 17). This is an important part of the Green Belt around the Bournemouth/Poole/Christchurch conurbation. The South East Plan does not propose any changes to the Green Belt boundaries in the Plan Area, but it states that if there are any cases for small scale local review, these can be pursued through the Local Development Framework process (submitted SE Plan Policy CC10a). Policy Outline CS8 sets out the proposed Green Belt policy in this Core Strategy.

- 6.26** Small areas are currently excluded from the Green Belt on the eastern boundary of New Milton, at Naish Farm west of Barton-on-Sea, Avon and two larger areas are excluded to the south-east of Ringwood.

Fig. 17: Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty, and Green Belt



GAPS

- 6.27** The submitted South East Plan proposes a “Strategic Gap” between Southampton and Totton. (The Report of the Panel (August 2007) recommends the deletion of references to specific ‘Strategic Gaps’). The gaps between the Waterside settlements (Totton - Marchwood, Marchwood - Hythe, and Hythe - Fawley) have been protected under previous Structure Plans as important to the local settlement structure and linking the New Forest to the coast. The adopted Local Plan identified “Local Gaps” between Fordingbridge - Ashford and Ashford - Sandleheath. All of the gaps referred to above are important in considering the location of new development. Policy Outline CS 9 sets out the proposed policy on Gaps in this Core Strategy.

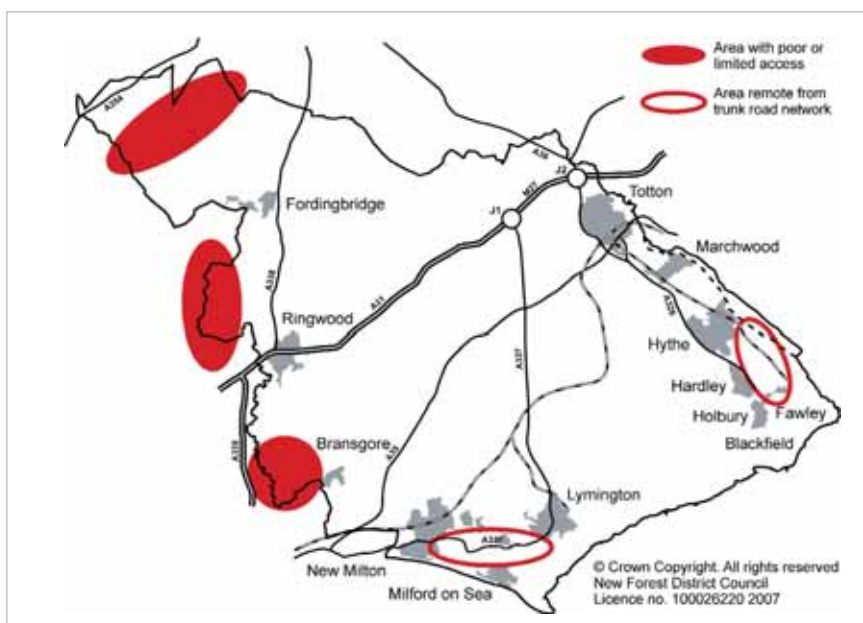
(f) Transport

6.28 The transport infrastructure serving the Plan Area is described in paragraphs 2.17 to 2.19 above. Key issues affecting the broad location of development are:

- Access to the Waterside
- Access to the coastal towns.

6.29 Figure 18 below shows the parts of the Plan Area that have relatively poor or limited access to the trunk and strategic road network. Many of the environmentally sensitive parts of the District are already covered by lorry restrictions (those for the northern New Forest are due to be implemented shortly). The numbers of heavy goods vehicles using inappropriate minor roads remains a concern especially in the north western part of the Plan Area.

Fig. 18: Access to trunk and strategic road network



(g) Other infrastructure considerations

WATER SUPPLY

6.30 The Plan Area is well supplied with water as it contains large reservoirs at Blashford Lakes (administered by Wessex Water and Bournemouth and West Hampshire Water) which draw water from the River Avon, and Testwood Lakes (administered by Southern Water) which draw from the River Test. It is understood that water supply is adequate to serve current and future needs in the Plan Area.

WASTE WATER

6.31 Waste water in the District and the National Park is dealt with by Southern Water and Wessex Water. There are treatment works within the District, for example at Slowhill Copse, Marchwood, Ashlett and Pennington. These are understood to be adequate to serve current and future needs.

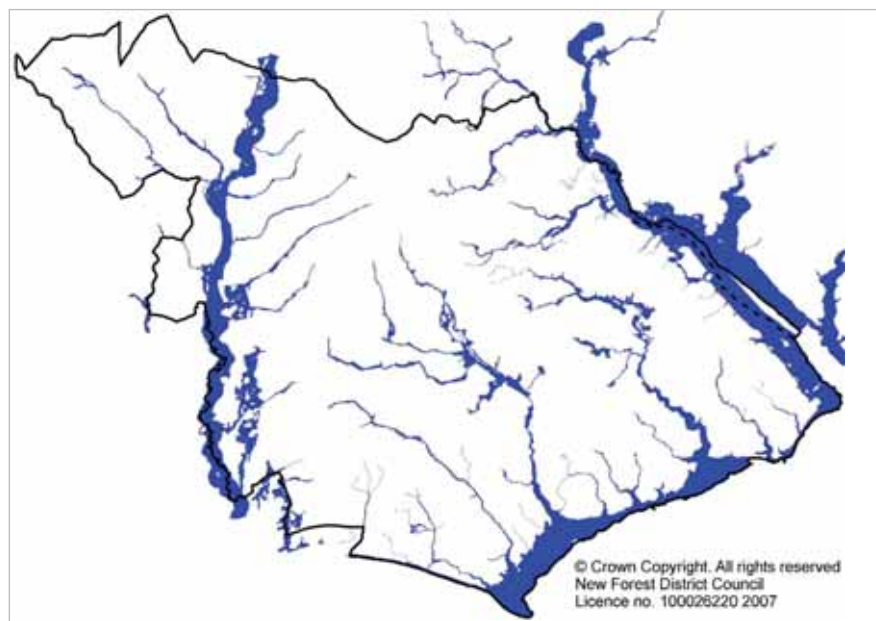
(h) Protecting the character and quality of life in towns

6.32 The evidence-gathering and consultations carried out in drawing up this Preferred Options Document have highlighted the growing concerns about the impact that higher density residential development (including development of gardens and redevelopments at higher densities, often replacing houses by flats) is having on the character of parts of the Plan Area's towns and villages and on the quality of life within them. The spatial options therefore do not as a matter of course assume that development in the towns and villages will continue at recent rates, but include as an alternative an approach based on protecting the character of the towns and villages.

(i) Flood risk

6.33 The low-lying parts of the coast and the river valleys are subject to flood risk (see Figure 19). A Strategic Flood Risk Assessment has been undertaken (Background Paper BP19) which confirms that along the coast of Southampton Water and the north-west Solent shore, the sea level rise predicted in Planning Policy Statement 25 will impact on lower lying parts of the coastal settlements of Totton, Marchwood, Hythe, Lymington and Milford, and some coastal sites. This will have implications for coastal defences, and sites subject to European designations, for which compensation habitats may need to be sought, and/ or provision made to allow natural migration of habitats and species inland. With climate change and increased storminess, the risk of flash flooding from sudden increases in surface water run-off is likely to be an issue in the river valleys. New development needs to be located so far as possible outside areas at risk from flooding, and where it does not itself increase risk of flooding elsewhere.

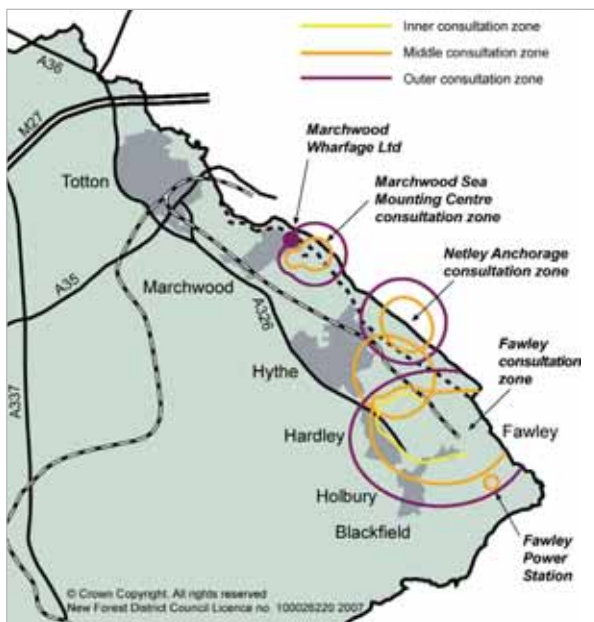
Fig. 19: Areas currently at risk from flooding



(j) Major hazards

- 6.34 Within the Plan Area there are a number of uses that can potentially pose a risk to life and property, and which therefore influence the location of development (see Figure 20). Around the Fawley oil refinery, petrochemicals complex and power station, safeguarding consultation zones limit residential and institutional development (the Health and Safety Executive advises against residential and institutional development in the inner zone, institutional development in the middle zone, and major developments involving large numbers of people in the outer zone). There are military installations at Marchwood and off Hythe surrounded with explosives safeguarding zones, but these affect only small parts of these built-up areas.

Fig. 20 Major Hazards



- 6.35 The Plan Area lies entirely within the safeguarding consultation zones for Bournemouth and Southampton airports but this is not a constraint on the location of housing and employment uses in the Plan Area.

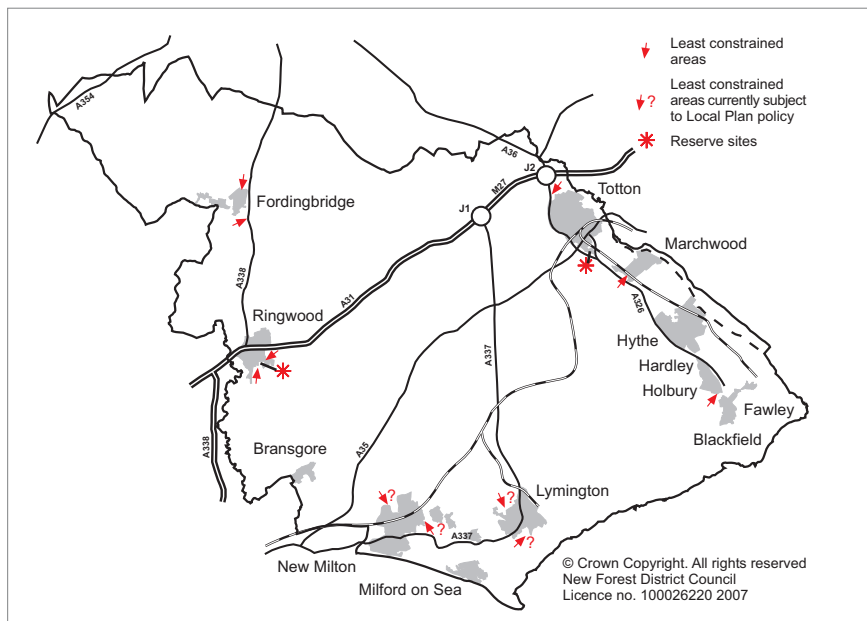
(k) Existing reserve sites

- 6.36 The adopted Local Plan identifies two “reserve sites” for possible longer term development. These are at Crow Lane, Ringwood (reserve site for up to 7 hectares residential development and up to 3 hectares employment development) and at Durley Farm, Hounsdown (reserve site for up to 7 hectares residential development). It is appropriate for this Core Strategy to review the status of these reserve sites.

LEAST CONSTRAINED AREAS

- 6.37 In order to help meet local housing and employment needs and to ensure that the South East Plan requirements are met, the spatial options have to consider the scope for some more development outside the current boundaries of towns and villages. Drawing all of the above considerations [(a) to (j)] together, “least constrained areas” were defined as a basis for drawing up a set of spatial development options for full appraisal. These are shown in Figure 21.

Fig. 21: Least constrained areas



SITES SUGGESTED BY CONSULTEES

6.38 Consultations on Future Matters Issues and Options and the former Employment DPD have brought forward a variety of suggestions that sites or general areas be identified for development, including:

- areas of land north of Totton
- sites around Marchwood
- Dibden Bay
- Land between Holbury and Blackfield
- Sites in the Green Belt adjoining and near Lymington
- Sites in the Green Belt around New Milton
- Land near Bransgore
- Land south and south-east of Ringwood
- Land adjoining Fordingbridge and Bursledon

A full list of sites suggested by consultees is included at Annex 11 of Appendix 11.

6.39 This Core Strategy document deals with the proposed strategy, rather than detailed sites and will be followed by a “Sites and Designations” Development Plan Document. Many of the sites suggested by consultees are included in the areas considered and appraised, at the strategic level, through the appraisal of the spatial options as described below. Annex 11 to the draft Sustainability Appraisal Report (Appendix 11) explains why other sites suggested by consultees have not been included in the spatial options below.

Developing Strategic Spatial Options - housing and employment

- 6.40 There could be many different spatial options, depending on different levels of development and the various possible locations for development. It would not be productive or helpful to attempt to define and appraise every possible option. The District Council has therefore defined and tested four basic representative options, and used the outcome of this assessment to arrive at a Preferred Option. The housing figures and employment site areas used in these basic options are approximate; they refer only to the areas outside the National Park, although a working assumption has been agreed with the National Park Authority that an additional 220 dwellings 2006-2026 - on average 11 a year - will be built in the National Park (in addition to commitments at 1st April 2006).

Spatial Options 1-4

- 6.41 The four representative options are summarised below, along with key conclusions of the appraisal and assessment processes. The spatial options are set out in full in the draft Sustainability Appraisal Report at Appendix 11.

OPTION 1: CONCENTRATE DEVELOPMENT IN BUILT-UP AREAS

Continue past rates of residential development in the built-up areas (allowing for some reduction in supply over the plan period); complete remaining employment allocations - no new green field sites or use of existing reserve sites

- 6.42 This would provide about 5300 new dwellings in the Plan Area, of which around 35% would be in Totton and the Waterside, 35% in Lymington and New Milton, 20% in the Avon Valley and the rest in rural settlements.
- 6.43 In terms of employment, it would involve completing existing allocations in Totton and Waterside, Lymington and New Milton and in Ringwood, amounting to some 28ha overall (plus possibly the 30ha reserved for petrochemicals uses at the Fawley Refinery) along with intensification of use of some existing employment sites.

OPTION 2: DEVELOPMENT IN BUILT-UP AREAS THAT RETAINS THEIR CHARACTER

Reduced rates of development in built-up areas to protect their character - remaining employment allocations completed - no new green field sites or use of existing reserve sites.

- 6.44 The draft Urban Potential Study indicated that this would provide about 3650 new dwellings in the Plan Area, of which about 39% would be in Totton and the Waterside, 41% in Lymington and New Milton, 14% at Ringwood and Fordingbridge, and the rest in other rural settlements.
- 6.45 In terms of employment, it would involve completing existing allocations in Totton and Waterside, Lymington and New Milton and in Ringwood, amounting to some 28ha overall (plus possibly the 30ha reserved for petrochemicals uses at the Fawley Refinery) along with intensification of use of some existing employment sites (as Option 1).

OPTION 3: DEVELOPMENT IN BUILT-UP AREAS THAT RETAINS THEIR CHARACTER, PLUS DISPERSED NEW GREEN FIELD SITES

Reduced rates of residential development in built-up areas to protect their character - complete remaining employment allocations - allocate existing reserve sites for housing and employment - identify new small-scale sites for residential and employment development adjoining main built-up areas to meet local needs.

- 6.46** Depending on how much green field land is allocated, this could provide up to around 5,100 new dwellings (this was taken as a broad maximum beyond which the Plan would be likely to be out of conformity with the SE Plan) of which 39% would be in Totton and the Waterside, 39% in Lymington and New Milton, 17% in Ringwood and Fordingbridge and the rest in rural settlements.
- 6.47** In terms of employment, as well as completing the existing allocations in Totton and Waterside, Lymington and New Milton and in Ringwood amounting to some 28ha overall (plus possibly the 30ha reserved for petrochemicals uses at the Fawley Refinery), and intensification of use of some existing employment sites, Option 3 also includes potential new allocations at Hythe (5ha), New Milton or Lymington (11ha), and Ringwood (3ha).

OPTION 4: DEVELOPMENT IN BUILT-UP AREAS THAT RETAINS THEIR CHARACTER PLUS FOCUSED NEW GREEN FIELD SITES IN TWO STRATEGIC LOCATIONS

Reduced rates of residential development in built-up areas to protect their character - complete remaining employment allocations - identify new sites for housing and employment in locations with good access to the strategic/ trunk road network e.g. focus larger scale housing and employment allocations close to the A31 at Totton and Ringwood.

- 6.48** This took the same broad maximum housing provision as Option 3 i.e. about 5100 new dwellings, but distributed differently: approximately 43% would be in Totton and the Waterside (mainly in Totton), 29% would be in Lymington and New Milton, 23% would be in Ringwood and Fordingbridge (mainly Ringwood) and the rest in rural settlements.
- 6.49** In terms of employment, as well as completing the existing allocations in Totton and Waterside, Lymington and New Milton and in Ringwood amounting to some 28ha overall (plus possibly the 30ha reserved for petrochemicals uses at the Fawley Refinery), and intensification of use of some existing employment sites, Option 4 also includes potential new sites at Hythe (5ha), New Milton or Lymington (11ha), a larger new allocation at Ringwood (8ha) and a major site north of Totton (20ha).

Appraisals and Assessments of the Spatial Options

- 6.50** These options have been assessed through Sustainability Appraisal (see Draft Sustainability Appraisal Report at Appendix 10) and through consideration of the extent to which they would meet the Core Strategy objectives (see Appendix 10), taking account of the following detailed assessments:

TRANSPORT ASSESSMENT (BACKGROUND PAPER BP21)

- 6.51** The Transport Assessment of the four basic options indicated that they would all involve some increase in traffic on local roads, with Options 1 and 4 having the greatest effects; also that development in the southern coastal towns would cause the greatest increase in traffic across the New Forest. However, it was likely that sub-regional development either side of the District, although further away, would have a significantly greater effect than the relatively small amounts of development being proposed in the Plan Area. Options 2 and 3 emerged as the most favourable overall.

DRAFT HABITATS REGULATIONS ASSESSMENT (BACKGROUND PAPER BP20)

- 6.52** Habitats Regulations Assessment looks at the extent to which a plan or policy is likely to have a significant effect on European nature conservation interests, and what would be needed to mitigate these effects. The draft Habitat Regulations Assessment of the four basic options indicates that while some potential for harmful impact cannot be ruled out, it is likely that sufficient mitigation could be provided to ensure that these impacts are not significant e.g. a strategy to increase the provision of recreational opportunities outside the areas of the New Forest that are subject to nature conservation designations, and policies to encourage sustainable use of water. Options 2 and 3 are preferred as these minimise traffic impacts on the New Forest SAC/SPA/Ramsar sites (e.g. air pollution, noise disturbance).

STRATEGIC FLOOD RISK ASSESSMENT (BACKGROUND PAPER BP19)

- 6.53** The Strategic Flood Risk Assessment shows that rising sea levels will increase flood risk around the shores of the District adjoining Southampton Water and the Solent, including some coastal built-up areas. The implications of fluvial flooding and the risk of flash flooding need to be taken into account for settlements inland adjoining rivers and streams.

HOUSING MARKET ASSESSMENT (BACKGROUND PAPER BP16)

- 6.54** The HMA indicates that there is a substantial need for affordable housing throughout the plan area. Options 1 and 3 perform better than Options 2 and 4 in terms of providing for local housing needs.

Sustainability Appraisal:

- 6.55** Initial appraisal results indicated that:

6.56 **OPTION 1, CONCENTRATE DEVELOPMENT IN BUILT-UP AREAS:**

- Provides more dwellings than needed to meet SE Plan requirement.
- Performs badly in terms of meeting the needs of local employers for more employment land, or providing new opportunities for increasing the proportion of knowledge-based employment in the District.

- Is likely to have an increased impact on the visual character of built-up areas.
- Would not impact on landscape or nature conservation sites as much as green field site options.
- Could increase traffic, and potentially worsen congestion and parking issues in built-up areas.
- Increases traffic flows through the New Forest.
- Gives some potential for limited contributions to funding improvements to the transport network.
- Could increase potential for access to alternative transport modes.
- May be affected by potential for flooding in parts of some coastal built-up areas, which may limit development potential and/ or increase development costs.

6.57 OPTION 2, DEVELOPMENT IN BUILT-UP AREAS THAT RETAINS THEIR CHARACTER:

- Is likely to provide fewer dwellings than South East Plan requirement.
- Would not provide as many affordable dwellings as options involving green field sites or higher density development in built-up areas.
- Would not meet the needs of local employers for more employment land, or provide new opportunities for increasing the proportion of knowledge based employment.
- Would not impact on landscape and nature conservation sites as much as other options.
- Would help to retain the character of built-up areas.
- Would involve the least traffic growth of all the options, limited impact on congestion and parking issues in the built-up areas.
- Involves the lowest increase in traffic flows through the New Forest of the four options.
- Is unlikely to provide significant contributions to funding improvements to the transport network.
- May be affected by potential for flooding in parts of some coastal built-up areas, which may limit development potential and/ or increase development costs.

6.58 OPTION 3, DEVELOPMENT IN BUILT-UP AREAS THAT RETAINS THEIR CHARACTER PLUS DISPERSED GREEN FIELD SITES:

- Provides more dwellings than needed to meet the South East Plan requirement.
- Could provide additional affordable housing close to the areas where the need arises.
- Could help to meet the needs of local employers for additional land, again close to where the need arises. However, this may have an impact on demand for housing in the area.
- Would have some impact on local landscapes through allocation of green field sites, but is unlikely to affect designated landscapes or protected nature conservation sites.
- Would help to retain the character of built-up areas.
- Involves some increased traffic flows through the New Forest.
- Could increase traffic, and potentially worsen congestion and parking issues in built-up areas.
- Gives some potential for limited contributions to funding improvements to the transport network.

- Maybe affected by potential for flooding in parts of some coastal built-up areas which may limit development potential and/ or increase development costs. However, there is potential to find green field sites outside areas at risk from flooding.

6.59 OPTION 4, DEVELOPMENT IN BUILT-UP AREAS THAT RETAINS THEIR CHARACTER PLUS FOCUSED GREEN FIELD SITES IN TWO STRATEGIC LOCATIONS:

- Provides more dwellings than needed to meet South East Plan requirement.
- Would provide additional affordable dwellings; however, these would be focused at Totton and Ringwood, so would not necessarily meet the needs of local communities elsewhere.
- Would help to meet the needs of local employers in Ringwood and Totton, but not elsewhere.
- Could provide an opportunity for substantial knowledge-based employment as suggested by the District Council's Economic Strategy. However, a substantial new employment site (e.g. north of Totton near M27 junction 2) would be likely to attract a major new employer into the area rather than provide for the needs of local firms, would be likely to increase local housing demand and could result in unacceptable impacts on the local road network.
- Would help to retain the character of built-up areas.
- Would have a significant impact on the landscapes north of Totton and east of Ringwood.
- Would cause the largest increase in traffic flows through the New Forest of the four options (see Transport Assessment, Background Paper BP21)
- Would be on a scale sufficient to help to fund identified improvements to the transport network. However, more detailed assessment would be needed of impacts on the A31 and M27 junctions, as these are likely to be of particular concern to the Highways Agency.
- Would take advantages of opportunities at Totton and Ringwood for travel by alternative modes, which could be enhanced by contributions from the new development; however, land north of Totton is somewhat remote from the public transport facilities in the centre.
- Would be affected to some extent by potential for flooding in some coastal built-up areas which may limit development potential and/ or increase development costs. Green field land at Totton and Ringwood is largely outside areas at risk from flooding, although development in these locations would need to include measures to avoid risk of adding to flood risk elsewhere.

The Spatial Options and Plan Objectives

- 6.60** The options have also been assessed in terms of the extent to which they meet the Plan objectives (see Appendix 10). Option 1 does not meet the Plan Objectives, as it involves unacceptable impact on the character of the built-up areas; nor does it meet employment needs. Option 2 meets the objectives better than Option 1, but does not provide adequately for housing or employment needs; also it does not meet the SE Plan housing requirement. Options 3 and 4 achieve more of the Core Strategy objectives, with Option 3 being more favourable in some respects, e.g. environmental impact and meeting needs locally. Option 4 offers more employment opportunities, principally because of its possible inclusion of an option for major employment development north of Totton, but this does not meet local needs for

employment land elsewhere in the Plan Area. Option 3 performs best overall, offering a balance between meeting local housing and employment needs where they occur, and maintaining some aspects of environmental quality.

The Preferred Spatial Option

- 6.61** In this document, the Council is setting out its thinking relating to the realistic choice of spatial options for the Core Strategy and is indicating its current preference regarding its “Preferred Spatial Option”. At this stage in the process, views are invited on the whole range of spatial options discussed in this document. New Forest District Council will consider the comments made and may well revise the Preferred Spatial Option in drawing up a Core Strategy document to formally submit to the Government. The submitted Core Strategy will be the subject of further consultation and its “soundness” (see Appendix 6) will be considered by an independent Inspector, having regard to the representations made at that stage.
- 6.62** The Council's current thinking, as a basis for this consultation, is that the Preferred Spatial Option should be based on a refinement of Option 3, involving less development than included in Option 3 and avoiding any commitment to development that is not needed either to meet specific local needs or to achieve the SE Plan requirements.

Policy Outline CS3: Preferred Spatial Option for housing and employment: Summary

The Preferred Spatial Option is to provide for:

- Residential development, in accordance with the settlement hierarchy defined in Policy Outline CS2, in towns and larger villages where it retains and enhances their character in accordance with Policy Outline CS25
- A limited number of green field sites for new housing and employment as set out in Policy Outlines CS4 and CS5 (the detailed sites will generally be defined through the “Sites and Designations” Development Plan Document, which will include a review of the existing reserve sites). These sites to be developed only if and when needed, having regard to the available land supply:
 - to help meet local housing needs (maximising the provision of affordable housing), and the needs of local employers; and/or
 - to ensure that housing and employment land requirements of Planning Policy Statements and the South East Plan are satisfied
- Exceptionally small scale developments adjoining other settlements to meet specific local affordable housing needs
- Existing employment sites and allocations to be generally kept for employment uses
- Intensification of use of existing employment sites where possible, encouraging knowledge-based industries
- A flexible approach to small businesses (e.g. knowledge-based/design) which are compatible with adjoining land uses.

- 6.63** The Preferred Spatial Option is described in more detail below, and illustrated on the Key Diagram.

Housing - Preferred Spatial Option

- 6.64** As has been already set out, without any new greenfield housing sites, and keeping development within the towns and villages to a level that is consistent with maintaining and enhancing their character and quality of life, it is estimated that at least 3,630 additional dwellings will be provided over the Plan period (2006 - 2026). This is based on a very cautious approach towards redevelopments and “windfall” sites. Inevitably during a 20 year period, sites will come forward for housing within the towns and villages that are not included within this “base estimate” and it is very likely that the actual completions within the towns and villages (consistent with Policy Outline CS2) over the Plan period will exceed 3,630 dwellings, even without any new greenfield sites. The situation will be closely monitored.
- 6.65** New Forest District Council supports the housing requirement of 4,140 dwellings 2006-2026 as set out in the submitted South East Plan which has been endorsed in the report of the Examination in Public Panel. To meet this requirement, additional housing provision in the form of greenfield allocations will be made for some 290 dwellings. This provision will be made at Totton and Ringwood, where reserve sites are already identified. However, the actual sites to be allocated will be determined through the Sites and Designations DPD. It is unlikely that these sites will be needed for development to meet the South East Plan requirements until towards the end of the Plan period.
- 6.66** Beyond the greenfield site allocations referred to above, further releases of green field sites will not be needed to meet the requirements of the South East Plan. However, to address Key Issue 1 - Housing Needs, in particular the lack of affordable housing for local people, the preferred spatial option recognises that, over the 20 year plan period, it may be necessary to bring forward additional opportunities for development on the edge of settlements to help address a local communities' need for affordable housing. Policy Outline CS4 allows for this possible exceptional additional provision at each of the main settlements and suggests that the maximum additional provision could be up to 870 dwellings over the 20 year period (on sites within the “least constrained areas” identified in paragraph 6.37).
- 6.67** If this additional provision were made in full in response to local needs, the total housing provision 2006-2026 could be up to 4,770 dwellings which (taking into account the working assumption of 220 additional dwellings in the National Park). This could exceed the South East Plan requirement by up to 20%. This would not be inconsistent with the South East Plan, as the South East Plan requirement would only be exceeded through:
- (a) sites coming forward within the towns and villages which are entirely in line with this strategy and maintain and enhance the character of the area and the quality of life for residents; and /or
 - (b) sites coming forward to provide an exceptional contribution towards providing for affordable housing needs under Policy Outline CS4 below (see also policy CS16).

Policy Outline CS4 - Housing provision and distribution

The Preferred Option is to meet the submitted South East Plan requirement of 4140 new dwellings in New Forest District 2006-2026 by means of:

- completion of existing permissions and allocations,
- development within the towns and defined villages where it is consistent with maintaining and enhancing their character and quality of life,
- greenfield sites at Totton and Ringwood, to be identified through the "Sites and Designations" DPD (including a review of existing identified reserve sites) and unlikely to be needed until towards the end of the Plan period.

In addition, possible provision will be made for up to 850 additional dwellings within the Plan area, 2006-2026, on sites that provide an exceptional contribution towards addressing identified local affordable housing needs (as set out in Policy Outlines CS16 and CS17).

The proposed distribution of the new dwellings 2006-2026 is as follows:

Settlement	Development anticipated in existing built-up areas (No. of dwellings) (i)	New green field site allocations (No. of dwellings) (ii)	Total provision made in this Core Strategy to meet SE Plan requirement (No. of dwellings) (iii) = (i) + (ii)	Possible additional provision to address local housing needs (No. of dwellings) (iv)	Possible maximum provision 2006-2026 (No. of dwellings) (v) = (iii) + (iv)
Totton and the Waterside					
Totton	780	120	900	Up to 30	Up to 930
Marchwood	90		90	Up to 150	Up to 240
Hythe and Dibden	340		340	See note (3)	340
Fawley/ Hardley/ Holbury/ Blackfield/ Langley	200		200	See note (3)	200
Lymington - New Milton					
Lymington	830		830	Up to 150	Up to 980
New Milton	520		520	Up to 200	Up to 720
Ringwood and Fordingbridge					
Ringwood	340	170	510		Up to 510
Fordingbridge	170		170	Up to 120	Up to 290
Smaller settlements in all sub-areas(1)					
Rest of plan area	360		360	Up to 200 (3)	Up to 560
TOTAL	3630	290	3920 (2)	Up to 850	Up to 4770

Notes:

- This includes small affordable rural sites permitted under Policy CS17 below.
- To this should be added the working assessment of 220 dwellings 2006-2026 in the New Forest National Park. (3920 + 220 = 4140 the South East Plan requirement)
- Sites developed under CS16 in Hythe, Blackfield and Langley, Hardley and Holbury, Fawley included in this figure.

Employment land - Preferred Spatial Option

- 6.68** The key elements of the Preferred Spatial Option as it relates to employment sites were set out in Policy Outline CS1 above. Policy Outline CS5 below sets out in more detail the Preferred Spatial Option for employment land. Other aspects of the Core Strategy relating to the local economy are addressed in Section 7.3.
- 6.69** The preferred spatial option aims to help meet local employment land needs where they arise, including smaller scale provision of the type outlined in the District Council's Economic Strategy, focusing in particular on encouraging knowledge-based businesses and maximising the use of existing sites and premises.
- 6.70** Taking account of existing supply, other available previously developed sites, and small new greenfield allocations around some of the main settlements, the Preferred Option proposes provision for up to 46 hectares of employment land (32.5ha already identified) within the Plan Area over the Plan period. This would be less than is required to continue past rates of development, but the important factors set out in paragraph 6.16 need to be taken into account.

The Preferred Option provides sites in each of the 3 parts of the Plan Area

Policy Outline CS5 - Employment sites

The Preferred Option, having regard to the aims of the Council's Economic Strategy, is to:

- Keep for employment use all existing employment sites and allocations where there is a realistic prospect of continued employment use (other than those few identified for release in the Employment Land Review as set out below), including the following remaining undeveloped allocations:
 - (a) 13ha at Marchwood and Cracknore Industrial Estates, Marchwood
 - (b) 1ha at Hardley Industrial estate
 - (c) (plus continued reservation of 30ha for petrochemicals uses at Fawley refinery)
 - (d) 3ha at Ampress, Lymington
 - (e) 4.2ha east of Caird Avenue New Milton
 - (f) 7.0ha east of Christchurch Road, Ringwood [but consider, through the Sites and Designations DPD, the scope for a limited amount of residential development on part of this site in association with a review the mix of employment and housing uses on the land identified under (j) below]
- (g) Allocate the 5ha former RAF site at Shore Road, Hythe for marine-related employment use

Policy Outline CS5 - Employment sites: continued

- Identify further sites for employment development over the 2006-2026 period through the Sites and Designations DPD:
 - (h) Adjoining Totton (up to around 5 hectares)
 - (i) in New Milton, extending into the current Green Belt east of Caird Avenue (up to around 5 hectares)
 - (j) at Ringwood within the land already excluded from the Green Belt west of Crow Lane including the currently identified reserve site (up to around 5 hectares)
- Release the following sites from employment use, as concluded in the Employment Land Review:
 - (k) Bus Depot, 200 Salisbury Road, Totton
 - (l) Depot, New Road, Blackfield
 - (m) Dairy Depot, Foxponds, Pennington
 - (n) Ashley Motor Repairs, Ashley, New Milton
- Only allow loss of employment sites to non-employment uses where replacement provision is made that has equivalent or less environmental impact and is equally or more accessible,
- Encourage the redevelopment and intensification of employment sites, particularly those sites located within the main towns and with good access by a variety of transport modes.

Preferred Spatial Option - Further Appraisal Conclusions

6.71 The preferred spatial option, as outlined in Policies CS3, CS4 and CS5 above, has been subject to further appraisal, the overall conclusions of which are that it enables some local housing needs and some needs of local employers to be met closer to where they arise, and minimises impacts on the character of the towns. It involves some green field sites which may have some environmental impact which will need mitigation, and particular social or economic justification for the development e.g. to meet local needs. It will involve some increase in traffic on local roads; this will need to be mitigated by encouraging the use of alternative transport modes. There may be limited impacts, which can be dealt with through mitigation, on the New Forest and other sensitive sites through some potential increases in recreational pressures, demand for water, and levels of air and water pollution. [Note: the full appraisals are in the Draft Sustainability Appraisal Report at Appendix 11, the Draft Habitats Regulations Assessment (Background Paper BP20), and the Transport Assessment (Background Paper BP21)].

Town, village and local centres

6.72 The District Council commissioned consultants to advise on a strategy for town and village centres within the District, and in particular to assess the need for new retail, business/ office and leisure and entertainment development. Their report is Background Papers BP3, BP3a, BP3b, BP3c and BP3d.

6.73 In general, the main towns within the plan area (Totton and Hythe in the east,

Lymington and New Milton in the south, and Ringwood and Fordingbridge in the west), provide a good range of services and facilities and local employment opportunities for the communities living within and around them. The scale of housing and employment change proposed above in Policy Outlines CS3 to CS5, is not big enough to have a major impact of the existing pattern of town and village centres in the Plan Area.

6.74 PPS 6 'Planning for Town Centres' sets out a sequential approach to the selection of sites for new retail and other town centre functions. This emphasises the approach of 'town centres first' when looking to accommodate the future needs of an area. The submitted South East Plan states that accessible, attractive and vibrant town centres are fundamental to the sustainable development of South East England (Policy TC1). It requires that the role and regeneration of town centres should not be undermined by intensification of out-of centre uses (Policy TC4).

HIERARCHY OF CENTRES

- 6.75** Policy Outline CS6 sets out the proposed hierarchy of shopping centres, based on the role and functions of each centre, as recommended by the consultants:

Policy Outline CS6: Hierarchy of shopping centres

The Preferred Option is to maintain and enhance the vitality and viability of centres within the Plan Area to support the following hierarchy of shopping centres:

- Town centres - Lymington, New Milton, Ringwood and Totton
- District centres - Hythe and Fordingbridge
- Village and Local centres - the rest

- 6.76** “Town centres” will complement the larger regional/sub-regional centres by providing for bulk convenience food shopping and will provide a reasonable range and choice of comparison shopping facilities and other services. “District centres” will complement the four main towns by catering for bulk convenience shopping and services, but will provide a more limited range of comparison shopping. Although Hythe is one of the main settlements in the district, with the relatively limited range of shopping and services in the centre it functions as a 'District centre' rather than a 'Town centre'. “Village and Local centres” will serve small localised catchment areas - catering for basket and top-up shopping trips and provide some local services.

Retail, commercial and leisure development

- 6.77** The Consultants study (Background Paper BP3) has found that
- the plan area is already well provided with convenience goods shopping floorspace (food, drinks, newspapers, confectionery)
 - The need for additional convenience goods retail floorspace in the plan area up to 2018 is modest (up to 2500sq.m by 2018) and can be accommodated by extensions to existing stores and new provision within defined centres. There is no identified need for additional convenience food shopping floorspace in the western part of the district before 2018.
 - In the period up to 2012 the priority area for new convenience goods floorspace is the southern part of the District.
 - Most of the future requirement for new retail floorspace is in the comparison goods sector - items such as clothing, footwear, household and recreational goods.
 - On the basis that large stores selling goods traditionally sold within retail warehouses (i.e. DIY, furniture, carpets and large electrical goods), can increase the level of comparison expenditure retained in the District, additional retail warehouse floorspace could be supported in the Lymington/New Milton area.
- 6.78** The consultants' report suggested quantities of retail floorspace (convenience, comparison and large-format retail warehousing) to be accommodated in the plan area over the 2005 - 2012 period and, with less certainty, over the longer 2012-2018 period. Further work will need to be done at a later date to establish needs beyond 2018.

6.79 Three options were appraised for the main town centres:

- a. Make no provision for additional retail and other commercial and service developments within the town centres
- b. Make provision for new retail, commercial and service developments to maintain and enhance the town centres, but without significantly altering existing shopping patterns.
- c. Make greater provision for new retail, commercial and service developments to maintain and enhance the town centres, to increase the town's share of expenditure.

6.80 Option a. would result in a decline in the vitality and viability of the town centres, and result in increasing amounts of retail expenditure, and shopping trips (by the area's residents) being made outside the District.

6.81 In considering Options b. and c. a critical factor is the town centre's ability to accommodate the extra floorspace in a way which maintains and enhances not only the commercial characteristics of the town centre but also protects and enhances the environmental quality and character of the town centre. This is a particular issue for the two historic town centres, Lymington and Ringwood, which are Conservation Areas. In relation to option c. it is difficult to predict whether sites identified as having potential for new town centre development will actually come forward for development during the plan period. Further, there are no guarantees that making provision for higher levels of retail floorspace within the town centres will be successful in changing future shopping patterns. The Council's consultants advise that the long term forecasts (up to 2018) are less reliable than the forecasts up to 2012, and that if the growth in expenditure is lower than forecast then the scope for additional floorspace will be reduced.

6.82 The conclusion of the appraisal of the options is that option b is preferred, but that the strategy should also allow for further opportunities to provide a higher level of comparison shopping floorspace, to increase the town's share of expenditure, if these can be accommodated within the town centres and have a positive environmental as well as economic benefit to the town centre.

Policy Outline CS7: New retail, commercial and leisure development

The Preferred Option is to enhance the vitality and viability of town centres as a focus for commercial, cultural and community activities. Provision will be made for at least the additional retail floorspace within the town centres of Lymington, New Milton, Ringwood and Totton as follows:

a. Convenience goods sales floorspace:

2005 to 2012 - 1,700 sq. metres net

2012 to 2018 - 800 sq. metres net

b. Comparison goods sales floorspace:

2005 to 2012:

Ringwood/ Fordingbridge 2,000 sq. metres gross*

Totton/ Hythe 2,500 sq. metres gross*

Lymington/ New Milton 3,700 sq. metres gross*

2012 to 2018:

Ringwood/ Fordingbridge 2,000 sq. metres gross*

Totton/ Hythe 2,800sq. metres gross*

Lymington/ New Milton 3,300 sq. metres gross*

c. Large format retail warehouse

2005 to 2012 - Lymington/ New Milton 2,200 sq m gross*

2012 to 2018 - Lymington/ New Milton 1,300 sq m gross*

Other town centre uses, including food and drink, leisure and entertainment, community uses and appropriate visitor facilities will also be accommodated within the town and district centres.

Proposals for major shopping, commercial or service development (including large extensions to existing stores) outside the four town centres would be required to comply with the sequential approach to site selection, and demonstrate no unacceptable impact on existing centres.

Within District and Local Centres new retail and other commercial, service and leisure uses should be of a scale appropriate to the role of the centre in the shopping hierarchy and proportionate to its size.

(* These figures are a combined total for both settlements.)

- 6.83** Sites sufficient to meet the minimum floorspace figures indicated by the policy will be identified in the Sites and Designations DPD.

Green Belt and Gaps

Green Belt

You told us:

We shouldn't be considering taking sites out of the Green Belt for development, except where this was required to meet a local need.

- 6.84** The extent of the Green Belt in the Plan Area is described above in paragraphs 6.26/27. National policies for Green Belts PPG2 'Green Belts' set out what type of development is appropriate within them and this national policy will apply to the Green Belt in the Plan Area.
- 6.85** In view of local development needs, some minor review of the Green Belt boundaries adjoining Lymington and New Milton is likely to be made, through the "Sites and Designations" Development Plan Document to meet the requirements of the Preferred Spatial Option, as set out in Policy Outlines CS3 to CS5 above.

Policy Outline CS8 - Green Belt

The Preferred Option is to maintain the general extent of the existing South West Hampshire Green Belt (as illustrated on the Key Diagram), in order to check the sprawl of the built-up areas of Lymington, Hordle, Everton, Milford, New Milton, Bransgore and Ringwood and prevent these settlements from merging, safeguard the countryside and coast from encroachment by built development, preserve the setting of towns and villages, in particular the historic towns of Ringwood and Lymington, and protect the New Forest National Park by restricting urban development pressures in the southern coastal area. Detailed revisions to the boundaries of the Green Belt adjoining Lymington and New Milton will be considered through the Sites and Designations Development Plan Document.

Gaps

You told us:

You wanted to see the 'gaps' between Totton-Southampton, between settlements in the Waterside, and between Fordingbridge-Ashford-Sandleheath retained.

- 6.86** The extent of Strategic and Local Gaps in the Plan Area was described in paragraphs 6.28 above. Strategic Gaps are defined through the regional planning process and the only Strategic Gap in the Plan Area in the submitted South East Plan is the gap between Southampton and Totton. (The Examination Panel have recommended deletion of references to specific Strategic Gaps, preferring a criteria based policy and identification of Strategic Gaps through Local Development Documents.)

- 6.87** The gaps along the Waterside (defined as Strategic Gaps in previous Structure Plans) are valued locally because of their effectiveness in maintaining the individual character of the Waterside settlements, and because of the links they provide between the New Forest National Park and the coast. The options considered for these gaps were:
- 1: to redefine all the gaps (other than the Totton-Southampton Strategic Gap) as local gaps
 - 2: to redefine all the gaps (other than the Totton-Southampton Strategic Gap) as local gaps, and add a further gap between Holbury and Blackfield
 - 3: to retain only the Totton-Southampton Strategic Gap, and to rely on countryside policies for retention of other gaps between Waterside settlements.
- 6.88** The submitted South East Plan gives some support for identifying the Waterside gaps as Local Gaps. These areas have a long history of protection as gaps between the Waterside settlements that also provide links between the New Forest and the coast of Southampton Water. The area between Hardley/Holbury and Blackfield is different in that it does not have such a history and it does not link the New Forest with the coast. Option 1 above (redefining the Waterside gaps as local gaps) is therefore preferred.
- 6.89** The Local Gaps between Fordingbridge and Ashford, and Ashford and Sandleheath, have been effective in controlling coalescence of these settlements, and there has been no significant change in circumstances since they were included in the statutory development plan.

Policy Outline CS9 - Gaps

The Preferred Option is to define Local Gaps between:

- Totton and Marchwood
- Marchwood and Hythe/ Dibden
- Hythe and Fawley
- Fordingbridge and Ashford
- Ashford and Sandleheath

(as illustrated on the Key Diagram) in order to prevent coalescence of settlements, and in the case of those between the Waterside settlements, to maintain valuable countryside links between the National Park and the coast of Southampton Water.

The boundaries of these Local Gaps, and of the Strategic Gap between Totton and Southampton (South East Plan Policy SH3), will be defined in the “Sites and Designations” Development Plan Document.

Transport

You told us:

We should look at a wide range of measures to reduce the impact of transport issues arising from future traffic growth. You wanted to see better public transport which more people used.

6.90 Plan Objective 5 seeks: “To reduce the need to travel, particularly using the private car and other unsustainable modes, and improve the accessibility and attractiveness of alternative transport modes. To provide safe and convenient access to services, employment and social and leisure opportunities”. This is not an easy objective to achieve, given trends in behaviour, the dispersed nature of towns and villages in the Plan Area, and the transport issues outlined below. Objective 5 has been taken into account in the development and appraisal of the spatial options set out in Chapter 5. In considering transport issues, the inter-relationships between the Plan Area and the National Park are very important, and close working will be essential.

6.91 The Core Strategy needs to reflect the Local Transport Plan 2006-2011, produced by Hampshire County Council (the local transport authority for the Plan Area), which sets out an overarching approach of:

- Reduce (traffic growth)
- Manage (traffic)
- Invest.

The Local Transport Plan also includes the 2006-2026 Solent Transport Strategy. The 2003 New Forest Area Transport Strategy covers the rest of the Plan area.

Congestion

6.92 Traffic levels are increasing in the District. Within the Plan Area congestion is of particular concern along:

- A31 Ringwood area
- A35 east of A326
- A326 south of the A35

Through traffic generated from outside the District is a significant factor particularly in respect of the A31.

6.93 An important issue is how to fund major capital schemes. The availability of funding at the local level is under pressure, and funding at the regional level is currently committed to schemes in other areas to 2016.

Access for those without a car

6.94 While car ownership levels in the District are high, 10,236 households (16% of the total: 2001 Census) are without access to a private car. Milton ward has over 23% of households that are “Pensioner Only” households with no car. Young people also want independent access to services. Where there is a lack of adequate public transport, community transport provision to enable people to access essential services and facilities is very important.

Buses

- 6.95** The local concessionary fares scheme for those 60 or over has encouraged greater use of buses across the District and into adjacent areas which has improved accessibility for many. The local scheme is due to be replaced by a national scheme in 2008 but it is hoped that the benefits of the current local scheme will be retained. Financial help to community transport and care (car) schemes was recently increased. There have been improvements to bus services in the Waterside and Totton areas in 2006 and some improvements to services in the Coastal Towns area. However there have been reductions in some of the more poorly used services and financial considerations may result in more services being withdrawn.

Rail

- 6.96** There is a long-standing safeguarding for a new rail station at Bartley Park, Totton but this has at best only limited support. It is unlikely that funding for it will come forward. There are also long-standing safeguardings for new stations and associated works to enable the reintroduction of passenger services along the existing line between Totton and Hythe. The safeguardings will be reviewed when the conclusions of the Access to the Waterside study are known (see para 6.101).

Cycle and pedestrian routes

- 6.97** A number of significant (and also more modest) cycle route proposals and improvements to the pedestrian network are being progressed and although there are still many gaps in strategic and local level cycle networks, it is hoped that as these are filled, better facilities for pedestrians and cyclists will result in less reliance on the private car.

Road safety

- 6.98** Road casualty rates continue to be a concern. Hampshire County Council have been successful in reducing the number of people killed or seriously injured (KSI) on the County's roads below the annual target of 684 KSIs agreed with Government. However there was a small increase in the number of recorded injury accidents on roads within the District in 2005. Traffic speeds are a concern for many communities and the Police, District Council, Hampshire County Council and other stakeholders are working together to address these concerns through a variety of initiatives including Speed indicator devices, "20mph is plenty" campaign outside schools and "Village 30" review.

Access to town centres

- 6.99** Some of the District's main shopping centres (in particular, Lymington and Hythe) experience considerable pressure on public car parking space. Others (notably Totton) are well provided with car parking space, but the overall layout of the town centre and ease of access by means other than the car fall short. Revised off-street parking charges and decriminalised on-street parking enforcement have made a positive contribution towards reducing car use, without a detrimental impact on local communities and businesses. On-street parking charges are being considered in accordance with the Council's Traffic Management Strategy.

6.100 The Hampshire Local Transport Plan envisages the preparation over the next few years of town centre access plans for selected towns in the county. These will make it easier for pedestrians and cyclists to access and move round the town centres. In the future (hopefully before 2011) it is anticipated that town access plans for Hythe, Ringwood and Totton will be prepared and further improvements progressed. The studies should identify the appropriate action needed to maintain and improve the accessibility of each centre, by all appropriate modes. The use of existing car parking provision should be optimised through regulation and revision to layout. However the need to make car parks as secure as reasonably practical and ensure that they contribute towards the visual amenities of the area is equally important. Providing a linked system of cycle routes within town centres will be a challenge but one that needs to be met through deliverable proposals. In some cases there will be a need to make additions to the supply of public parking to maintain the economic vitality of town and village centres. There is a pressing need for more tourist coach parking especially in Lymington.

Access to the Waterside

6.101 The Hampshire LTP identifies this as a strategic issue within the context of the South Hampshire Sub-regional Strategy. HCC have initiated a study of the options but the results have yet to be published. Proposals being considered include the following:

- Hythe-Southampton ferry upgrade possibly including associated park and ride
- A326 Highway improvements including bus/high occupancy vehicle priorities
- A35 Rushington - Millbrook highway improvements including bus/high occupancy vehicle priorities
- Reinstatement of passenger rail services from Hythe and Marchwood
- Quality Bus Partnership Waterside to Southampton
- Totton Air Quality Management Area.

Access to the southern coastal towns

6.102 Access to the Lymington and New Milton area (total population 49,000 including neighbouring villages) from the north is either by the B3054 across open Forest or by the A337 (north), most of which runs through the National Park and can be subject to serious and unpredictable delays in the summer months particularly at Lyndhurst. On the other hand both towns have a good rail service and good internal links for pedestrians and cyclists.

Policy Outline CS10: Transport

The Preferred Option is to work, in partnership with others, to:

- seek means of implementing:
 - improvements to the A35 and A326 (safeguarding the required land);
 - reinstatement of passenger rail services from Hythe and Marchwood (safeguarding the land needed for stations and ancillary works);
 - improvements to Hythe Ferry and park and ride facilities;
- implement the Strategic Cycle Route Network identified in 2004 and to implement other improvements to local cycle and pedestrian networks;
- review the need for continuing to safeguard land for a new railway station at Bartley Park, Totton;
- enhance the viability and availability of bus services and, where public transport is not viable, encourage alternative transport provision to ensure that those without access to a private car have access to services and facilities necessary for their well-being;
- better manage on-street parking and traffic management through traffic regulation proposals that are consistent with the Council's Traffic Management Strategy;
- implement casualty reduction and speed reduction initiatives;
- improve access to town centres, taking into account the recommendations of town centre access studies to be carried out during the period of this Strategy. This will include improvement of routes for walking, cycling and public transport, the effective management of car parking and improved coach parking provision, investigation of the introduction of on-street charging and, where justified, carefully planned additions to public car parking space;
- improve access to the southern coastal towns area (working closely with the New Forest National Park Authority);
- mitigate adverse traffic impacts on the New Forest National Park;
- secure appropriate financial contributions from developments towards the implementation of identified transport infrastructure proposals (in accordance with Policy Outline CS29), having regard to the costs of those schemes and to the likely availability of public funding.

Local implications of the spatial strategy

Totton & Eling

- This is the largest settlement in the Plan Area in terms of population. The main issues are the quality of the town centre, pressure for further development to the north, and related transport issues, in particular the implications for the M27 of further development in or near the town, Eling Wharf lorry access issues and ongoing needs for affordable dwellings. Beyond the plan period, parts of Eling and other parts of the town centre may be affected by rising sea levels.

- In the Preferred Spatial Option, Totton will be the main focus for retail and leisure development for this sub-area providing for bulk convenience food shopping and a reasonable range and choice of comparison shopping facilities and other services. It will continue to provide a good range of services and facilities which meet the needs of the town and the surrounding communities, including those within the National Park. New retail and other commercial developments and environmental improvements will take place within Totton town centre to enhance its commercial vitality and viability and improve the appearance of the centre.
- Over the plan period up to 930 additional homes will be built in Totton, on the remaining allocated sites in the West Totton growth area, and through general infilling and redevelopment within the town. This may require up to about 150 dwellings on new green-field sites (of which at least 120 will be allocated through the Sites and Designations DPD). New housing schemes will provide additional affordable dwellings to address the housing needs of local people.
- Totton will be an important local centre for employment. Existing employment sites will be retained and there is scope to make better use of some existing sites. There will be opportunities for local businesses to expand, mostly through the intensification of use of existing sites. Up to 5 hectares new employment land is proposed. New employment development will include office development in the town, some of which will be in the town centre.
- The town will continue to provide for a wide range of recreation and leisure activities. Improvements will continue to be made to the network of green routes, green spaces, footpaths and cycleway links within the town.

Marchwood

- Marchwood has accommodated considerable growth in recent decades. It contains two large employment sites - the Marchwood Industrial Park and the Cracknore Industrial Park, neither of which is fully developed. It is also home to a significant military presence relating to the Marchwood Sea Mounting Centre. There is a thriving local community, and the local centre and school provide some local services.
- The main issues in the settlement are provision for community needs, in particular affordable housing for local people and youth and leisure facilities; improving access to the coast for leisure purposes; making best use of the allocated employment sites. Beyond the plan period, rising sea levels may have implications for the industrial sites nearest the coast.
- Over the plan period, a further 90 dwellings are likely to be built through ongoing development within the settlement. The Preferred Spatial Option identifies Marchwood as a possible location for some additional green field development of up to 150 new dwellings. These will include provision for local affordable housing needs, and may be able to bring forward opportunities to improve provision for other community needs.
- Given the existing large industrial sites, this is not currently seen as a priority area for additional employment development. Better use will be made of land already in employment use (much of which is currently used for open storage) to provide a wider range of types of employment opportunities, including the development of technology and knowledge-based industries.
- The local centre will provide for the everyday needs of the community, together with a limited range of local services. Improvements will be made to public access and enjoyment of the waterfront.

Dibden Bay

- Dibden Bay is a site of strategic significance in the Plan Area. Representations that the site should be allocated for port development have been considered through the sustainability appraisal process (see Annex 11 to Appendix 11). This concluded that the development of a container port or port related development at Dibden Bay would have a very substantial environmental impact, including the loss of sites subject to European and international designations, and adverse impacts on the New Forest National Park. Such development would need to be justified in terms of national needs. There are no specific proposals for Dibden Bay in the South East Plan or the Hampshire Minerals and Waste Core Strategy DPD. It is a Site of Special Scientific Interest and the foreshore is also a Special Protection Area and Ramsar site. It immediately adjoins the National Park, providing a link between the Park and the coast, and provides an important local gap between Waterside settlements. (See Policy Outline CS9.)

Hythe and Dibden

- This is a large, predominantly residential settlement that has also accommodated significant growth, particularly in the Dibden area. Its potential for further growth is severely constrained by the National Park on two sides, the coast on the third, and a narrow gap on the fourth that is substantially within the major hazard consultation zone for the Fawley Refinery and petrochemicals complex. Any further increase in development will therefore be predominantly within the built-up area. The centre of Hythe will act as a district centre providing a good range of services and facilities for the Waterside communities, with bulk convenience shopping and services, but a more limited range of comparison shopping.
- The main issues within the town are the shortage of employment opportunities, affordable housing for local people, a need for more playing fields, and the need to enhance the historic character of the town, developing the potential it may have for visitor enjoyment of the local maritime heritage. The centre of Hythe is already at risk from flooding, and beyond the plan period, this is likely to worsen with sea-level rise. It may be necessary for new development to contribute to improvements in flood defences. Competing demands on town centre car parks from ferry users and those using the town will increase as spare capacity is used up.
- Some 340 dwellings are expected to be built in the town over the plan period. New housing schemes will provide additional affordable dwellings to address the housing needs of local people.
- There are limited employment opportunities within Hythe and Dibden. However, a new opportunity has arisen from the closure of the RAF Hythe site at Shore Road, which is being retained for marine-related employment development.
- The centre's historic character will be protected and enhanced. Regeneration of Hythe waterfront, and the adjoining commercial areas will create new employment opportunities and enhance the commercial vitality of the centre, as well as enhancing the appearance and improving public access to the waterfront. A major opportunity exists to improve the area around the Pierhead.

Hardley, Holbury, Blackfield, Langley and Fawley

- This will continue to be an important area for employment associated with the petrochemical industry. Land is identified at the Fawley Refinery and petrochemicals complex for future expansion of petro-chemical based industries.
- Local shopping centres will continue to provide for convenience goods shopping and the everyday needs of the local community for goods and services.
- The existing high quality sport and recreation facilities will be retained and enhanced.
- Up to 200 new dwellings will be provided on sites within the existing built-up areas, and all new housing schemes will contribute towards providing additional affordable dwellings to address the local need.

Lymington and Pennington

- Lymington is an historic town situated to the south of the New Forest in the southern coastal area. It is an important shopping and tourist destination, and the main centre for sailing activity in the District. It is surrounded entirely by the Green Belt, and the National Park is in close proximity to the north, east and south, and part of the west.
- The main issues in the town are the maintenance of the attractive historic centre, traffic and parking, providing scope for continuing economic prosperity, and the affordability of housing for local people.
- In the Preferred Spatial Option up to 980 dwellings will be provided in the town up to 2026, including housing to help meet the needs of local people. Many of these are existing commitments arising from redevelopment of a number of large sites in the town. However, up to 150 may need to be provided on green-field land currently in the Green Belt.
- Lymington will be the main comparison goods shopping centre in the Plan Area catering for the town, surrounding communities and visitors to the coast and New Forest, as well as providing bulk convenience shopping. The town centre will continue to provide a good range of cultural, entertainment, community and visitor facilities. The commercial role of the centre will be protected. The town centre will provide local employment opportunities, particularly in the service sector. The lack of adequate car and coach tourist parking facilities is an issue.
- Lymington will also continue to be an important centre of employment, with a range of manufacturing, service and distribution, marine and tourism-related jobs. The remaining existing employment sites will be retained in employment use. There may also be a local need for more employment land.
- The historic character of the town will be protected and enhanced. Change will be managed to minimise any impact on the town's historic character.
- The Quay and riverfront have been enhanced to provide quality facilities for visitors and marina users. Improvements will continue to be made to public access and enjoyment of the riverside where opportunities arise.

New Milton and Barton-on-Sea

- New Milton is a relatively modern sub-urban settlement that has developed around the main line railway to the south of the New Forest. Barton-on-Sea extends the town to the coast of Christchurch Bay. It is an important

shopping and employment centre.

- The main issues in New Milton are the quality and character of the town centre and the sea-front at Barton-on-Sea, and the need to enhance leisure and entertainment uses in the town centre, local affordable housing needs, and, particularly at Barton-on-Sea, a local population imbalance with a significantly higher than usual proportion of older people (40%). Local employers have also expressed a need for more land. There are coastal erosion issues at Barton-on-Sea.
- The Preferred Spatial Option envisages that the town centre will be revitalised as the social and economic heart of the community. It will provide for bulk convenience food shopping and a reasonable range and choice of comparison shopping facilities and other services. Leisure and entertainment provision in the town centre will be enhanced.
- Over the plan period up to 720 additional homes will be built in New Milton, mostly within the existing built-up area, but potentially with up to about 200 dwellings on green field sites. The town already has good provision of accommodation for elderly people, and to redress the population imbalance in the town and protect the established character of residential areas, there will be an emphasis on providing new housing which meets the needs of young people and families. New housing schemes will provide additional affordable dwellings to address the housing needs of local people.
- Additional provision will be made for new employment land to respond to the expansion needs of existing companies in this sub-area.
- Improvements will be made to the sea-front at Barton on Sea to improve enjoyment of the coast and help to achieve a local aspiration to promote the town as a gateway into the National Park.

Milford-on-Sea

- Milford-on-Sea is a small coastal settlement of some character, closely surrounded with the Green Belt. There are holiday camps close to it which mean that it is a popular tourist destination. Local issues include the need for affordable housing for local people, the need for additional playing fields, and protection of valued character in the built-up area and on the coast. There may be potential to develop further the tourism potential of the village. There are issues of coastal erosion and flooding, and beyond the plan period, these are likely to be aggravated by sea-level rise.
- The Preferred Spatial Option identifies Milford as a smaller settlement where some limited development, that maintains and enhances its character, may be appropriate. Particular attention will be given to addressing the need to provide additional affordable housing for local people. This may be provided on sites within the built-up area and possibly through small scale 'exception' developments adjoining the village.
- The village centre will continue to provide for the day to day shopping needs and a range of local services to meet the needs of the local community and visitors to the area.
- Local recreation facilities will be improved and the provision of a new community sports/games hall supported.

Hordle and Everton

- No major changes are proposed but the Council will continue to work with the local community on the Village Plan and any major proposals arising from that may be taken on board in future Development Plan Documents. New small scale housing development to needs of local people for the affordable housing needs of local people may be permitted.

Ringwood

- Ringwood is the largest town on the western side of the District, close to the boundary of the National Park, situated on the bank of the River Avon. It is an historic town with an attractive centre, and thriving industrial estates to the north and south. It is divided by the A31 trunk road. Most land to the south of the town is within the Green Belt.
- The main issues in the town include resolving the future of the central parts of the town around the main car parks, including provision of improved shopping, community and entertainment facilities, and need for more local employment opportunities and for more housing which is affordable to local people. There is also a need to improve provision of playing fields.
- In the Preferred Spatial Option Ringwood will be the main shopping and commercial centre for the west of the district providing for bulk convenience food shopping and a reasonable range and choice of comparison shopping facilities and other services. New development in the town centre will enhance its role as a retail, service and cultural centre.
- Over the plan period up to 510 additional homes will be built in Ringwood. This will mainly be through ongoing infilling and redevelopment within the built-up area, but about 170 dwellings will be allocated to sites through the Sites and Designations DPD. New housing schemes will provide additional affordable dwellings to address the housing needs of local people.
- Ringwood will be an important local centre for employment. There will be opportunities for local businesses to expand, through the intensification of use of existing sites, the development of existing allocations and through release of some new green field land for employment development adjoining existing employment sites on the southern edge of the town. A combined review of the mix of employment and housing uses on the currently vacant Christchurch Road employment site and on the land excluded from the Green Belt in the Crow Lane area will determine the best way of providing for the amounts of housing and employment development proposed at Ringwood in Policies CS4 and CS5.
- Ringwood may be well suited for the establishment of a combined business start-up workspace/skills centre on an allocated employment site.

Fordingbridge and Ashford

- Fordingbridge will continue as the main district centre serving the north western part of the district. Over the plan period up to 290 additional homes will be built in Fordingbridge. This may require a limited amount of new development, for up to about 120 dwellings, on green field sites. New housing schemes will provide additional affordable dwellings to address the housing needs of local people.
- Improvements will be made to public open space provision in the town and to the accessibility of the riverside Recreation Ground.

Sandleheath

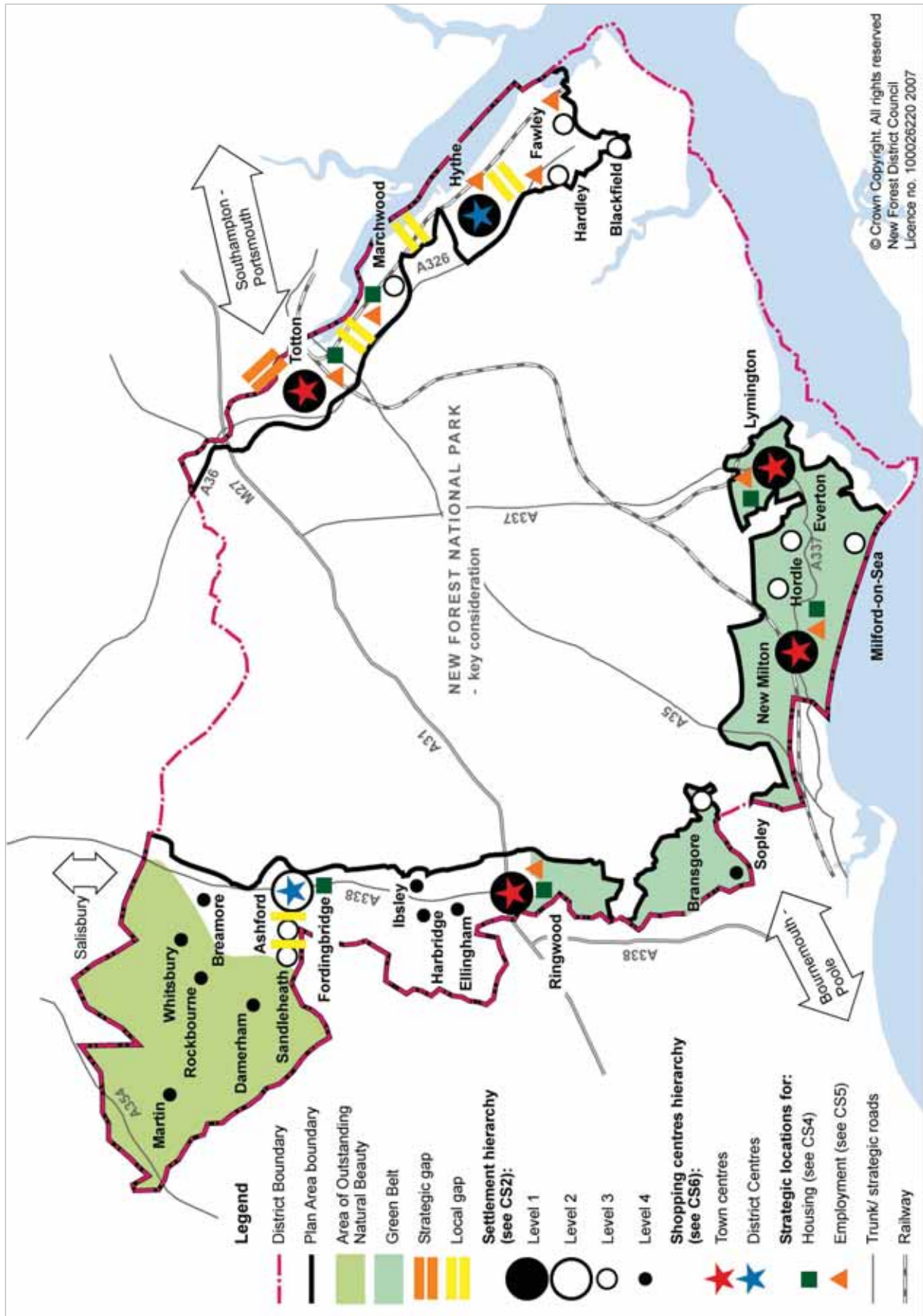
- No major changes are proposed. New small scale housing development for the affordable housing needs of local people may be permitted.

Bransgore

- No major changes are proposed. New small scale housing development to help the needs of local people for affordable housing may be permitted.

Rural communities

- Policies will continue to protect the countryside but will also recognise the social and economic needs of rural communities. Many rural communities are working on a community plan for their area which will highlight local issues. The District Council is supporting rural communities in their work on Parish Plans and will address identified needs through the Local Development Framework.
- The lack of affordable housing for local people is an issue for most rural communities. Policies to allow small scale residential developments to provide affordable housing for local people in housing need will continue. Suitable sites for new affordable housing will have reasonable access to local facilities and services and be well related and integrated within the existing community.
- There continue to be significant changes in the rural economy. Support will be given to the local delivery of services and the retention of local shops and pubs. Encouragement will be given to diversification of the rural economy and support given to local business development through the conversion of existing buildings and enabling home-working, with particular encouragement of enterprises that have few adverse environmental impacts (e.g. design/research activities).



7. Other Core Policies

7.1 Climate change, energy, resource use, infrastructure and flooding

7.1.1 Global warming poses a huge threat to both the natural and built environment. It is widely acknowledged that it is important to minimise the environmental impact of new development in terms of energy, water use, and flooding whilst ensuring that all development is resilient to the impacts of climate change. These are important issues locally, as evidenced by the response to the “Future Matters Issues and Options” consultation (see Appendix 2), and are objectives of the Council's Community Strategy (see Appendix 9)

7.1.2 This section covers:

- energy and resource use, including sustainable construction;
- infrastructure and utilities (water, electricity, gas, telecommunications etc); and
- flooding, including that likely to arise from climate change

Minimising the use of motorised transport and the sustainable location of development are also a major consideration in relation to energy and resource use and factors such as air pollution that contribute to climate change. These are addressed in Section 6 above.

Energy and Resource Use

You told us:

We should be encouraging greater water and energy efficiency and the use of renewable energy. We should be building homes to higher environmental standards.

7.1.3 National, regional and sub-regional targets with regard to construction standards will need to be implemented locally. These may involve innovative designs and building techniques, including those that can contribute to biodiversity and flood mitigation such as, for example, green roofs and sustainable drainage systems, which will have implications for the appearance of buildings and sites (see also paragraph 7.4.12 and Policy CS25).

7.1.4 The Plan Area contains a number of conventional power stations (see paragraph 7.1.11 below), but relatively little renewable energy generation. Some renewable energy sources such as major on-shore or off-shore wind turbines may prove difficult to locate given landscape and nature conservation constraints; however, the area has natural assets that could contribute other forms of renewable energy. An equable local climate with a relatively high proportion of sunshine suggests potential for the use of solar energy for on-site power generation. Local commercial forestry, agriculture and horticulture, and a local commitment to waste recycling may provide potential for energy generation from biomass/ anaerobic digestion. For all forms of development,

there is the opportunity to take advantage of evolving 'micro generation' technologies that enable on-site power generation, although this may again involve some change in the appearance of new and existing development.

- 7.1.5** The District has adequate water resources but these are shared with adjoining sub-regions. The Environment Agency has recently completed a Catchment Abstraction Management Plan for the New Forest. With the increases in sub-regional development, and ongoing climate change, water-saving measures in new development are likely to be necessary.
- 7.1.6** A strong local commitment to recycling and re-use of waste materials needs to be reflected in a flexible approach to design and use of recycled materials for building (see paragraph 7.4.12 and Policy CS25 below).
- 7.1.7** **Planning Policy Statement (PPS)1 'Delivering Sustainable Development' and PPS 22 'Renewable Energy'** provide guidance on various aspects of sustainable development. In addition the Code for Sustainable Homes provides guidance on energy standards and energy efficiency expected in new development. A PPS on Climate Change to supplement PPS 1 is in preparation.
- 7.1.8** The submitted South East Plan refers to sustainable water resources (Policy NRM1), and to sustainable construction and the development of renewable energy sources (Policies EN1 - EN4), including sub-regional targets for renewable energy provision. Sub-regional Policy SH14, 'Environmental Sustainability' provides further policy guidance on sustainable construction including reductions in water use. The Panel Report of the Examination of the South East Plan recommends revisions to Policy SH14, and the Partnership for Urban South Hampshire has also developed a policy outline. These are combined into the policy outline below.

Policy Outline CS11 - Energy and Resource Use

The Preferred Option is to:

- a. ensure that new residential buildings meet the requirements of the Code for Sustainable Homes, achieving at least Level 3 up to 2012, Level 4 from 2012 to 2016, and Level 6 from 2016, with particular emphasis on water efficiency
- b. ensure that new commercial buildings over 500 sq. m. meet the BREEAM 'very good' standards to 2012, and the BREEAM 'excellent' standards from 2012.
- c. require all developments to:
 - demonstrate high standards of energy efficiency
 - incorporate energy-efficient passive solar design principles wherever possible
 - maximise opportunities for micro-generation of renewable energy, providing at least 10% of energy demand from renewable sources in all new housing developments and commercial schemes over 500 sq. m.
 - use recycled materials in construction where possible
 - achieve a decrease of between 8% and 20% in water use (compared to the national average in 2005)
 - include sustainable urban drainage systems where possible recognising that these measures may involve the use of innovative building styles and techniques.
- d. promote high standards of energy efficiency and efficient water use in existing developments
- e. enable the provision of larger scale infrastructure to generate renewable energy

[Note: policies for transport and sustainable location of development are at Section 6 above.]

Infrastructure and Utilities

7.1.9 The supply of water, electricity, gas and telecommunications services, and the treatment of waste water in this District are the responsibility of a number of statutory undertakers, privatised utility companies and telecommunications code system operators.

7.1.10 Water and waste water treatment services in this District are supplied by the Southern Water and Wessex Water Companies, and the Bournemouth and West Hampshire Water Company. The District's water supply comes from reservoirs in the Avon Valley and at Testwood; also an aquifer at Lymington. Waste water is treated at Slowhill Copse Marchwood, at Ringwood, and at Ashlett and Pennington in the National Park. The Hampshire Minerals and Waste Development Framework (prepared by Hampshire County Council and the New Forest National Park Authority) will control any further development of waste water treatment facilities.

7.1.11 The District contains power stations at Marchwood (an Energy Recovery Facility and a new gas turbine power station under construction), the Fawley oil-fired power station and further power generation facilities within the Fawley

Refinery. There are major oil and gas pipelines crossing the District. Within the plan period, there is a possibility that the Fawley Power Station may be decommissioned.

7.1.12 The District is also served by a number of telecommunications masts. Broadband is now available in most parts of the District.

7.1.13 PPS1 'Delivering Sustainable Development' requires the provision of essential infrastructure to support housing and economic development. PPG8 'Telecommunications' deals with the provision of telecommunications infrastructure including masts.

7.1.14 The submitted South East Plan requires that development should not proceed unless the necessary infrastructure required to serve it is available or will be provided (Policy CC5).

Policy Outline CS12: Infrastructure and Utilities

The Preferred Option is:

- (a) to work with statutory undertakers, privatised utility companies and telecommunications code system operators to develop an implementation plan for this Core Strategy to ensure delivery of adequate infrastructure to serve existing and proposed development in the plan area and support the local economy, ensuring that any adverse impacts arising from any further infrastructure that needs to be located within the plan area are minimised, and that decisions on the provision of such infrastructure are taken on the basis of environmental sustainability as well as cost.
- (b) to help to find sustainable alternative uses for major built infrastructure installations such as power stations that have reached the end of their useful life. In the event that the Fawley Power Station is decommissioned, the District Council will work with the site operators and other interests to find appropriate alternative uses for the site.

Responding to flood risk including that arising from climate change

You told us:

You thought that managing the impact of climate change in the New Forest over the next 20-30 years was very important. We should be managing the coastline and marine areas in an integrated way, and over half supported a strategy of “managed retreat” in some areas.

7.1.15 A particular consequence of climate change likely to affect the Plan Area is the rise in sea levels. The Strategic Flood Risk Assessment (Background Paper BP19) indicates the areas of the coast most likely to be at risk, which include parts of Totton, Marchwood, Hythe, Lymington and Milford; it indicates that existing flood defences are already below standard for current flood risks. Increased storminess not only increases fluvial flows but will generate more

frequent and/or higher storm surges and greater wave heights that will increase both the rate of coastal erosion and the risk of coastal flooding due to overtopping of defences. Increased rainfall and intensity of rainfall are also likely to lead to some increase in river flows that could impact on settlements in the river valleys, e.g. Ringwood and Fordingbridge. The time horizons chosen for assessing the impacts of climate change - 2070 and 2115 - are related to the anticipated life of commercial development (approximately 60 years) and residential development (approximately 100 years). The important issue of locating new development outside areas currently at risk from flooding, or likely to be at risk as a result of climate change, or likely to increase flooding elsewhere has been taken into account in considering the various options for location of new development (Chapter 6 above).

- 7.1.16** Other consequences could include loss of/ changes in natural habitats. For example, losses of coastal habitats arising from inundation could be worsened by flood defence measures that limit natural migration landward (coastal 'squeeze'). Other impacts could include an increased risk of damage to sensitive habitats and associated impacts on landscapes, e.g. an increased risk of forest/heathland fires. Policies for biodiversity are set out at Section 7.4 below.
- 7.1.17** The main national policy guidance on coastal management is provided in PPG20 'Coastal Planning'. It discusses policies for their conservation and development and policies covering risks of flooding, erosion and land instability, as well as coastal protection and flood defence. In addition PPS25 'Development and Flood Risk', and its accompanying practice guide (draft) provide further information on coastal planning and protection against flood risk, including the principles for controlling development in areas at risk from flooding, and/or that may give rise to flooding elsewhere. The submitted South East Plan reinforces PPS25 guidance.
- 7.1.18** National guidance in the companion guide to PPS9 'Planning for Biodiversity and Geological Conservation: A Guide to Good Practice' refers to the need to allow for the creation of new habitats and the migration of habitats and species in response to climate change.
- 7.1.19** The District Council led the production of the Western Solent and Southampton Water Shoreline Management Plan (SMP) which covers the coast of Southampton Water and the Solent, and contributed to the Poole and Christchurch Bays SMP which covers the coast from Hurst Spit to Barton-on-Sea. The forthcoming North Solent SMP (a combination of the Western Solent and Southampton Water SMP and the Eastern Solent and Harbours SMP) is reviewing the management policies for defending the coast of Southampton Water and the Solent over the next 100 years. The Poole and Christchurch Bays SMP is also to be reviewed. These SMPs will have implications for the location of coastal development, and for coastal protection and flood defence works, including areas where contributions are required to construct new defences. The SMPs will also need to have regard to nature conservation interests as set out in Section 7.4 below.

Policy Outline CS13 - Flood Risk

The Preferred Option is to:

- work with the Environment Agency, Natural England, English Heritage, the National Park Authority and landowners and other stakeholders to prepare the North Solent Shoreline Management Plans that will set out a sustainable and practicable approach to coastal protection and flood defence for the built-up areas to a level consistent with predicted sea level rise and increased river flows arising from climate change, and will also identify opportunities for managed retreat of the coastline where defence is no longer economic

[Note: managed retreat of the coastline may also be necessary in order to provide for replacement habitats and migration of species - see Policy Outline CS24 below.]

- seek to ensure that flood protection measures minimise damage to nature conservation and biodiversity interests
- limit new development, in accordance with PPS25 and the SE Plan, in areas likely to be at risk of flooding due to climate change, or likely to worsen flood risk elsewhere, unless measures can be put in place that will reduce this risk.

7.2 Housing needs

You told us:

We should be doing more to help local people afford the housing which they need. We should be providing more affordable housing. We should provide more different types of affordable housing.

7.2.1 The affordability of housing for local people has been a key issue in New Forest District for over twenty years. Planning policies to secure affordable housing as part of developments of market housing, and 'rural exceptions' policies to provide affordable housing for local people in rural communities, are both well established. The importance of these issues is reflected in Key Issue 1 and Plan Objective 2.

Background Research

7.2.2 A review of local housing needs has been undertaken for the work on the Core Strategy. The assessment of the housing market and housing needs in New Forest District has been undertaken as part of work on the South Hampshire Housing Market Assessment (Background Paper BP15) and the Central Hampshire and New Forest Strategic Housing Market Assessment (Background Paper BP16), both undertaken by DTZ Consulting and Research. The second of the two studies draws together the findings of both studies to provide information for New Forest District (including the part within the National Park) as a whole.

STRATEGIC HOUSING MARKET ASSESSMENT (BACKGROUND PAPER BP16)

7.2.3 The main findings of the Housing Market Assessment for the District were:

- The Housing Markets in New Forest District are self-contained - people don't tend to move to different parts of the District.
- The district looks east and west with few household and travel to work movements across the District.
- Growth in older age groups
- 50% of existing housing stock is detached or semi-detached
- High house prices throughout - although most of the towns are relatively cheaper.
- Affordability is very poor and declining
- Over 5,000 households have current housing applications registered in New Forest District. (5,074 in March 2007, 3879 in high priority or priority need. 83% of these households had a local connection.)
- A further 470 households a year fall into housing need.
- House price to Earnings ratio 11:1
- 69% of all households would not be able to purchase a home now - the % of newly forming households that cannot afford to buy will be much higher.
- 51% of all households and 81% of new households can not afford to rent market housing.
- There is a shortfall of affordable housing of between 560 and 960 dwellings per annum in the New Forest District.
- Housing need is spread throughout the area.
- There is particular pressure on larger social rented stock.

AFFORDABLE HOUSING ECONOMIC VIABILITY ASSESSMENT (BACKGROUND PAPER BP14)

7.2.4 An assessment of the economic viability of providing affordable housing as part of market housing developments in New Forest District (and National Park) has been undertaken by consultants Three Dragons and Rural Housing Solutions. Its main findings were:

- Six sub-markets for housing can be identified in the area - New Forest South, Southern Coastal, Northern Forest and Rural, Avon Valley, New Milton, and Totton and the Waterside.
- In general, site values in the area are very high - substantially above the South East Region.
- In the district site values are lowest in Totton and the Waterside parishes.
- There is scope for increasing current requirement of 35% affordable housing, with the development remaining viable.
- In high value areas 50% affordable housing provision is likely to be economically viable
- Affordable housing is economically viable on small sites.
- Increasing reliance on smaller development sites - unless thresholds are reduced opportunities to provide affordable housing will be missed and targets to provide affordable housing will not be met.

THE CHALLENGES TO MEETING LOCAL HOUSING NEEDS

7.2.5 The area faces a number of challenges to addressing the local housing needs, notably:

- The reducing supply of new homes
- The increasing reliance on small sites for new development
- The high and increasing local need for affordable housing
- The breadth of housing needs
- The need for larger family social housing.
- The choices to be made in setting priorities in the context of not being able to address all local housing needs.

National and Regional policies - housing needs

7.2.6 National planning policy for housing is set out in Planning Policy Statement 3: Housing (PPS3). A key objective of PPS3 is to deliver: “A mix of housing, both market and affordable, particularly in terms of tenure and price, to support a wide variety of households in all areas, both urban and rural.” The vision of the Housing Green Paper (2007) is for everyone to have access to a decent home at a price they can afford, in a place where they want to live and work. Good quality affordable housing enables stable and secure family lives: we are all healthier, happier and wealthier when we have decent homes close to schools, healthcare and transport links

7.2.7 The submitted South East Plan Affordable Housing Policy H4 seeks to deliver a substantial increase in the amount of affordable housing in the region, and sets a regional target that 25% of all new housing should be social rented accommodation and 10% other forms of affordable housing. In the South Hampshire Sub-Region, the policy (Policy SH13) is to achieve on average 30%-40% of new housing to be affordable housing. (Report of Panel (August 2007) recommends no changes to these requirements.)

7.2.8 In rural areas, both national and regional planning policy advocate the use of small-scale 'exception' sites, within or well related to settlements, to provide affordable housing to address local housing needs which could not otherwise be met.

Housing types, sizes and tenure

You told us:

We should be providing more affordable housing.
We should build more small houses and not more flats.

7.2.9 The new dwellings to be built over the plan period will be a very small proportion of the total housing stock. It is therefore important that the types and sizes of housing built should reflect priority local needs as far as possible.

7.2.10 Local needs have been assessed from:

- demographic trends (see Section 1 above), which indicate increasing proportions of smaller households and of older people. This suggests an increased requirement for small dwellings. The SHMA suggests a need for mainly one and two bedroom properties and a smaller number with three

bedrooms, but recognises that because a significant proportion of the growth in single person households will be elderly households, the requirement for small dwellings may be overstated .

- the District Council's Homeseach Register, which indicates a need for affordable family houses.
- The findings of the Central Hampshire & New Forest Strategic Housing Market Assessment.

7.2.11 There is not a strong relationship between household size and dwelling size; for example, many of the single person households will be older people continuing to occupy their family homes. Simply building only small dwellings in the district over the plan period is unlikely to provide for all future households' housing needs or aspirations.

7.2.12 Small properties, in particular flats, often provide inflexible accommodation which may only meet a household's needs for a short period. Small houses offer more potential for adaptation to meet the changing needs of the occupiers. As the emphasis must be on meeting local housing needs, a higher proportion of new dwellings should be capable of providing flexible accommodation to adapt to the changing needs of households.

7.2.13 Since 2001 over half of the new dwellings built in New Forest District have been either one or two bedroom accommodation, mostly flats; only a small proportion have been small (1 or 2 bed) houses. A further issue with flats is their impact on the character of built up areas. In parts of the District there has been an increasing concern about the impact of new high density flats on the character of established residential areas.

7.2.14 The southern coastal area is a popular location for retirement, and is well provided already with sheltered housing and care homes. However, this is leading to a local population structure that contains a significantly higher than usual proportion of elderly people. Building more homes specifically catering to the needs of the elderly is likely to encourage further retirement migration into the area, and will not address a priority local housing need.

Policy Outline CS14: Housing types, sizes and tenure

The Preferred Option is to give priority to the delivery of affordable housing for local people in housing need, and in particular:

- provide opportunities for newly forming local households to meet their housing need;
- address the needs of smaller households, but be flexible to changing needs;
- provide for a range of accommodation sizes on larger sites and in particular address the need for family housing in the social rented sector.

Affordable housing policy options

7.2.15 Local households unable to afford house purchase in the Plan Area have a wide range of income levels. Various tenures of 'affordable housing' will be required to address their needs and to help create mixed and balanced communities. As well as social rented accommodation, these will include various types of "intermediate housing", intended for the growing number of households which do not have priority for social rented housing but cannot

afford market housing. This includes shared ownership, shared equity, and other low cost homes for sale and rent (sub-market housing). Such housing typically requires an element of public subsidy or cross-subsidy from market housing development secured through the granting of planning permission. Intermediate housing is provided in perpetuity, or will guarantee recycling of receipts from sales back into the provision of affordable housing.

7.2.16 Several policy options were considered and appraised as set out in Figure 22.

Fig. 22: Affordable Housing Policy Options

Option	Threshold	Contribution	Comments
a.	No site size threshold.	40% or 50% contribution for affordable housing on all sites across whole plan area	Not favoured. Economic Viability Study suggests that in high value areas, 40% does not maximise potential to contribute. In low value areas (Totton and Waterside) a 50% contribution would affect site viability and delivery.
b.	A site size threshold of 5 dwellings in the defined built up areas and settlements with populations of more than 3000 (excluding Bransgore). No site size threshold elsewhere.	40% or 50% contribution for affordable housing on sites within the defined built up areas of Totton, Marchwood, Hythe and Dibden, Hardley and Holbury, Ringwood, and Fordingbridge.	Not favoured. This could significantly limit opportunities to provide affordable housing. The Economic Viability Study states that there is no evidence as to why small sites are not viable to provide affordable housing. A policy including a site size threshold will encourage development schemes to come forward just under the site threshold
c.	No site size threshold.	40% contribution in defined low values areas. 50% contribution in the remainder of the Plan area.	This policy differentiates between the high and lower value parts of the district, recognising variations in the viability of affordable housing provision. On small sites in larger built up areas (less than 5 units), a tariff system could be operated. A variation could be to include provision of a higher mix of intermediate housing, on specific sites, to address viability issues. Intermediate housing will generate a higher land value than social rented housing. Another variation could be to phase the introduction of proposed affordable housing contributions to allow the market to adjust to the new requirement.
d.	A site size threshold of 15 dwellings in the defined built up areas and settlements with populations of more than 3000 (excluding Bransgore). No site size threshold elsewhere.	35% contribution across the Plan area.	Not favoured. Produces fewer affordable houses and misses opportunities to provide affordable housing on sites where it would be economically viable to do so. This is the policy of the current Local Plan and has encouraged developments in the built up areas to come in under the 15 dwelling threshold. The Economic Viability Study suggests that all sites can sustain a higher contribution of affordable housing (minimum 40%).

7.2.17 On balance and following Sustainability Appraisal, it was concluded that a Policy Option C, incorporating the two variations referred to, was likely to provide the most practicable means of achieving the best quantity and range of affordable dwellings.

Policy Outline CS15: Affordable Housing provision

The Preferred Option is to require all new residential development to contribute towards the provision of affordable housing in accordance with Policy Outline CS29, as set out below:

- On sites suitable for residential development (other than the “exception sites” dealt with in Policies CS16 and CS17):
 - In Totton and the Waterside, the target is for 40% of all new dwellings to be affordable housing, of which 25% of the total dwellings will be social rented housing and 15% of the total dwellings will be intermediate housing;
 - In the remainder of the Plan Area, the target is for 50% of all new dwellings on the site to be affordable housing, of which 35% of the total dwellings will be social rented housing and 15% of the total dwellings will be intermediate housing.
- Provision will normally be made on site. On sites where the preferred ratio of social rented to intermediate housing is proven not to be economically viable a higher proportion of intermediate housing may be provided to meet the overall affordable housing target.
- In the following circumstance the affordable housing contribution may be made by payment of an affordable housing contribution/tariff rather than on site provision:
 - On developments of 4 or less dwellings in the defined built-up areas of Totton, Hythe, Lymington, New Milton and Ringwood;
 - On developments of 1 or 2 dwellings in all other defined settlements.
- The contributions will be used to enable additional affordable housing provision on alternative sites, or to subsidise the provision of social rented housing on sites where social rented housing cannot be achieved without public subsidy.
- In settlements where the site size threshold for affordable housing provision had previously been set at 15 or more dwellings, on developments of 14 or fewer dwellings, the above affordable housing contributions will be applied subject to a 50% discount in the affordable housing provision required until 31 December 2010.

(See also Policy Outline CS29)

Exception sites to meet a local housing need - adjoining defined towns and villages

7.2.18 Policy Outline CS4 (Chapter 6) provides for a limited number of green field sites adjoining the towns and larger villages, to be exceptionally brought forward for development, specifically to provide for local affordable housing needs. This includes two new greenfield site allocations which are otherwise unlikely to be released for development until the later part of the plan period.

7.2.19 More than one site may come forward for development for each settlement over the plan period, if it is shown to address an outstanding local need.

7.2.20 Options for this exceptions policy are:

- (a) To require all houses built on such sites to be affordable as defined in PPS3.
- (b) To allow a wider range of tenures on these sites.

It is concluded that option (a) might be appropriate for some sites, but on larger sites a wider range of housing tenures within the scheme would create a more mixed and balanced community.

Policy Outline CS16: Exception sites to meet local housing needs - adjoining defined towns and villages

The Preferred Option is to allow for the possible early development of the sites identified in Policy CS4 as “new green field site allocations” and as “possible additional provision to address local housing needs” adjoining Totton, Marchwood, Lymington, New Milton, Ringwood and Fordingbridge to meet an identified local need for affordable housing which will not otherwise be met.

In addition, working with local communities to identify possible sites, further 'exception' sites which are modest in scale and relate well to the following settlements may be released for development to meet an identified local need for affordable housing which will not otherwise be met. Such sites should be no larger than could accommodate about:

- 20 - 30 dwellings in Hythe, Blackfield and Langley, Hardley and Holbury, Fawley and Milford on Sea;
- 10 dwellings in Hordle, Everton, Bransgore, Ashford and Sandleheath.

Suitable sites may be identified through Town and Village Plans.

Development permitted under this policy should provide a minimum of 40% social rented housing and 30% intermediate affordable housing. The remainder of the site may be developed for low-cost market housing which could include starter homes and self-build units.

Rural Affordable Housing

You told us:

We should be providing affordable housing for local people in rural communities

7.2.21 This section relates to all rural settlements which do not have a defined settlement boundary.

7.2.22 Problems of housing affordability are greatest in the rural parts of the District. Combined with the strict controls over new housing development, it often results in local people, particularly the young, having no alternative but to leave their community in order to find housing.

7.2.23 New housing development is not normally permitted in the countryside and small rural settlements, but the Council has well established policies which as

an exception to normal policies, and subject to strict criteria, permit new small-scale housing development where it meets an identified local housing need which would not otherwise be met. Suitable sites must be well related to existing communities, services and facilities, and a local person normally means someone who lives or works in, or who has strong connections with the settlement or parish in which the scheme is proposed.

7.2.24 Schemes permitted under this policy are subject to a planning obligation under Section 106 of the Town and Country Planning Act (1990) to ensure that all dwellings permitted as part of the scheme provide affordable housing for local people in perpetuity (a minimum of 80 years unless overridden by Statute).

7.2.25 In reviewing the existing policy, options have been considered relating to the tenure of dwellings permitted on rural exception sites:

- (a) only to permit dwellings that meet the definition of affordable housing set out in PPS3;
- (b) allowing a small element of market housing within rural exception schemes to help bring forward suitable sites for development.

Option (b) did not receive a favourable response when tested through the 'Future Matters Issues and Options' consultation - less than 30% of respondents supported allowing additional 'market' housing to be built in rural areas. It is concluded that option (a) is preferred.

Policy Outline CS17: Affordable housing for rural communities

The Preferred Option is to provide, exceptionally, for small scale affordable housing developments as defined in Annex B of PPS3 on sites in or adjoining an (undefined) village and well related to existing services and facilities, to be developed to meet the identified needs of local people unable to meet their housing needs in the housing market. Sites particularly suitable to address a community's need for affordable housing may be allocated for that purpose. The District Council will work with local communities to identify suitable sites, which may also be identified in Parish Plans.

Gypsies, Travellers and Travelling Showpeople

You told us:

We should be providing affordable housing for local people in rural communities

7.2.26 In the Plan Area there is a permanent site for gypsies at Bury Brickfields, Marchwood, which has 20 pitches and is managed by Hampshire County Council. In addition, there is a privately-owned site at Little Testwood Farm, Totton which currently provides for about 11 transit pitches.

7.2.27 Government guidance in ODPM Circular 1/06 'Planning for Gypsy and Traveller Caravan Sites' highlights the need to make site specific provision to meet the needs of gypsies and travellers. A particular reason for this is an attempt to reduce the number of illegal encampments. Social and welfare issues amongst

the gypsy and traveller community are also key considerations. The South East Plan contains an interim statement on provision for gypsies and travellers, and a partial review of the Plan is under way to provide a strategic view of requirements over the region, and identify pitch requirements for each local planning authority.

7.2.28 A recent joint Gypsy and Traveller Site Assessment for Hampshire (see Background Paper BP17) provides advice on provision for permanent and transit pitches on a district basis for the period up to 2011. To ensure the sustainable and co-ordinated location of pitches, New Forest DC is working with Hampshire County Council, Test Valley, Eastleigh, Southampton and the New Forest National Park Authority to meet identified needs.

7.2.29 Recent Government advice indicates that the accommodation needs of travelling showpeople should be considered along with those of the gypsy and traveller communities. Work is now in progress to update the assessment in respect of travelling showpeople. There are two sites occupied by travelling showpeople at Totton (and another in the National Park at Netley Marsh).

Policy Outline CS18: Gypsies, travellers and travelling showpeople

The Preferred Option is to work with neighbouring local planning authorities, Hampshire County Council, local communities, Hampshire Constabulary, Social Services and other stakeholders to ensure that the permanent and transitory needs of gypsies, travellers and travelling showpeople identified for this part of Hampshire are met in sustainable locations in the plan area and neighbouring districts.

7.3 Supporting Prosperous Communities

You told us:

We should encourage investment in the local economy by making better use of existing employment sites and buildings rather than finding new employment land. We should also improve and make better use of local people's skills.

7.3.1 This part of the Core Strategy addresses the local economy generally, and ways of keeping and encouraging more local jobs and businesses (Section 6 above addresses broad locations of employment development). The main characteristics of the local economy are described at paras. 2.8 to 2.12 above. Chapter 6 dealt with the Preferred Option for the location of employment development. This section deals with other Core Policies for the local economy, having regard to the Council's Economic Strategy.

Types of employment

You told us:

We should encourage small businesses and, in appropriate locations, marine-based industries.

- 7.3.2** There is relatively poor representation of large firms within the District (Background Paper BP6, Economic Profile of New Forest District 2006). This may not be surprising given the District's largely rural nature. However, there has been some recent investment from larger firms in Totton, seeking to take advantage of its favourable access to the strategic route network. The strategy should welcome and provide for such investment where appropriate. The employment land proposed in Policy CS5 above could accommodate some larger firms, particularly if redevelopment and intensification of existing employment sites is considered. More intensive use, e.g for high value-added knowledge-based enterprises, of some sites that are currently used for low intensity storage uses would bring forward benefits in line with the aims of the Council's Economic Strategy. Coastal employment sites clearly offer a particular advantage for marine-related employment.
- 7.3.3** The District has a large number of small firms and a healthy rate of business start-ups. A strategy which builds on these strengths would be consistent with the District's Economic Strategy which envisages a local economy based mainly on 'small businesses, local distinctiveness, knowledge-based and low impact types of business'.

Policy Outline CS19 - Types of Employment

The Preferred Option is to:

- enable office development in the town centres appropriate to the scale and role of the centres in the settlement hierarchy;
- encourage high value, knowledge-based enterprises;
- encourage small-scale businesses, including through start-up business units;
- identify and protect opportunities suitable for marine-related enterprise.

Workforce Skills

You told us:

To improve local skills, there should be closer working between colleges and local businesses and support for vocational training initiatives.

- 7.3.4** Background Paper BP6 'Economic Profile of the District 2006' shows that in terms of local skills, those with lower-paid skills such as manufacturing, skilled trades, sales and administrative work are slightly over-represented in the District, while those with higher paid professional, technical and managerial qualifications are slightly under-represented.

- 7.3.5** The District Council's Economic Strategy states that the Council will support the development of skills training facilities in the District. Improving access to training opportunities to develop business skills is also a priority in the District Council's emerging Community Strategy.

Policy Outline CS20 - Workforce skills

The Preferred Option is to work with the Education Authority, local colleges and business organisations to encourage the provision of training facilities to enhance workforce skills, including the development of training facilities on employment sites.

Flexible Working

You told us:

You supported the principle of encouraging home working.

- 7.3.6** Technology is making home working more feasible. There is already a higher than average proportion of home working in the District, which is consistent with its characteristics of small businesses and high rate of business start-ups. In the 2001 Census, over 11% of those in employment in the District worked from home. The proportion of 'home workers' is particularly high in the western, southern and central parts of the District, where 14% of those in work worked at home. Working from home can also help to reduce the need to travel, and in this way help to meet wider sustainability objectives.
- 7.3.7** PPG4 'Industrial and Commercial Development and Small Firms' encourages sustainable location of businesses and refers to home working. The South East based businesses including live-work units. The District Council's Economic Strategy generally supports measures to encourage small firms and business start-ups. An extension of the principle of home working would be the development of live-work units.

Policy Outline CS21 - Flexible Working

The Preferred Option is to:

- encourage home-working where there is no adverse impact on residential amenities;
- encourage home working as part of Green Travel Plans associated with new employment development;
- allow the development of live-work units on residential and mixed use sites subject to mechanisms to retain the employment element and safeguard residential amenities;
- allow for child-care facilities related to employment sites.

Rural economy

You told us:

You supported the re-use of rural buildings, and encouraging a wide range of farm businesses, especially those linked to environmental, recreational or educational benefits. You did not want to see new land allocated for business development in rural areas.

- 7.3.8** Traditional rural employment in agriculture, forestry, horticulture and fishing provide less than 1% of employment in the plan area. However, agriculture, forestry and horticulture have a substantial impact on the quality of the landscape, and on biodiversity. Parts of the Plan Area support the traditional practice of commoning that is essential to maintain the particular character of the New Forest National Park by providing back-up grazing land and dwellings for commoners.
- 7.3.9** In addition, rural areas can provide opportunities for other forms of economic activity (including tourism - see below), for example through farm diversification, building conversion and redevelopment.
- 7.3.10** PPS7 'Sustainable Development in Rural Areas' states that policies should promote a healthy and diverse economy, and recognise the importance of farm diversification and tourism. The submitted South East Plan requires support for agriculture, horticulture and forestry and the promotion of economic diversification in towns, villages and farms where proposals would provide positive benefits.
- 7.3.11** The District Council's Economic Strategy supports local food and produce initiatives. The Community Strategy identifies supporting the rural economy as a priority issue.

Policy Outline CS22 - Rural Economy

The Preferred Option is to work with other stakeholders as set out in the Economic Strategy to promote the rural economy by a variety of measures including:

- encouraging agricultural, horticultural and forestry enterprises, the conversion of suitable rural buildings for employment and community uses, the retention and redevelopment of existing employment sites, and farm diversification projects where this would be consistent with maintaining and enhancing the environment, and would contribute to local distinctiveness;
- enabling small scale built development for employment purposes in rural settlements;
- working with the National Park Authority and other neighbouring authorities to protect essential back-up grazing land to support commoning;
- enabling developments essential to maintain a rural workforce, including agricultural workers dwellings and rural community facilities (see also Preferred Policy Option CS17 Rural Housing above).

Tourism

You told us:

You were less interested in tourism issues and do not see many community benefits from it, but thought improving management of access and travel arrangements important. You agreed that the use of local produce and products should be encouraged. You want to see more 'car free' travel options for visitors. You thought the type of visitor accommodation we have in the area (including within the New Forest National Park) was 'about right'.

- 7.3.12** The presence of the National Park, the Cranborne Chase and West Wiltshire Downs Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty and the coast, and the character of the rural market towns and villages, bring visitors and tourism-related economic, social and environmental benefits to the area. Tourism-related employment is one of the largest employment sectors in the District; tourist facilities and amenities (e.g. leisure and travel facilities) can also benefit the community; and the maintenance of quality environments is also of benefit to biodiversity, tourism and the quality of life enjoyed by the local community.
- 7.3.13** The Plan Area contains a number of tourist and leisure attractions and facilities including hotels and related leisure facilities, restaurants, coastal camp sites and holiday parks, sailing activities, etc.. Key focuses for tourism include the historic towns and villages, in particular Lymington, Hythe, Ringwood, Fordingbridge and Milford, and the coast. There is potential for enhancement of the towns and the coast to benefit both tourism and the amenities of the local communities.
- 7.3.14** The Plan Area contains areas vulnerable to recreational pressures, but it can provide facilities and amenities to help to relieve pressures on the National Park, including helping visitors understand and contribute to the local area.
- 7.3.15** The submitted South East Plan seeks to regenerate coastal resorts (Policy TSR1), promote rural tourism (Policy TSR2), improve the quality of tourist attractions (Policy TSR4), and reflect the diversity of the tourist accommodation sector (Policy TSR5).
- 7.3.16** The District Council's tourism strategy 'Our Future Together' (currently being updated) is based upon priorities relating to visitors, the tourism industry, the local community and the environment. It seeks to encourage tourism businesses to adapt to change; retain existing serviced accommodation, especially hotels; promote small-scale proposals related to the diversification of existing businesses and the reuse of suitable redundant rural buildings for tourism and visitor purposes; and promote the role of tourism in the regeneration of settlements. It is based firmly on developing a sustainable approach to tourism management, for example, improved management and use of access and travel arrangements for all visitors.
- 7.3.17** In the District as a whole (including the National Park) a high proportion of tourist accommodation is provided in the form of camping and caravan sites. However, those staying in serviced accommodation (hotels, guest-houses etc) spend on average three times as much per day as those staying in self-catering accommodation, and over seven times as much per day as day-visitors. Serviced accommodation is vulnerable to pressures from other forms of

development, in particular residential. The Council's tourism strategy is to retain and support the viability of serviced tourist accommodation.

7.3.18 The emerging Sustainable Community Strategy reflects both the District Council's Tourism Strategy and its Economic Strategy, with key actions to help visitors to understand and contribute to the local area, support all sectors of the local tourism industry to improve quality in standards and services, engage with the local community in tourism development and decision-making, promote car-free tourism, and develop and promote New Forest Marque produce.

7.3.19 The District Council's Coastal Management Plan identifies opportunities for enhancement of coastal settlement frontages.

Policy Outline CS23 - Tourism

The Preferred Option is to work with other partners including local communities to:

- Support the local tourism industry, in particular the retention, enhancement and provision of new serviced accommodation and related facilities;
- Maintain and enhance tourist and visitor facilities in the Plan Area, including measures to assist in relieving tourist pressures on the New Forest National Park;
- Encourage the provision of tourism and visitor facilities in towns and villages that help to maintain their vitality and viability, and benefit local communities (see also Policy CS7 above);
- Enable the provision of interpretation facilities and other means of conveying key messages to visitors and tourists;
- Maintain a high quality natural and built environment, limiting tourist developments likely to give rise to an increase in harmful pressure on vulnerable habitats, landscapes and townscapes (see also policies CS24 and CS25 below);
- Enhance degraded coastal environments, and the coastal settlements of Barton, Milford, Lymington, Hythe and Eling, and improve access to the coast and coastal recreational opportunities;
- Encourage the provision of tourism and recreational facilities appropriate to the countryside, including through farm diversification, where they are consistent with environmental aims and National Park purposes insofar as they affect the National Park;
- Support the development and promotion of New Forest Marque produce and its use by the tourism and visitor industry;
- Support car-free initiatives that benefit both tourists and local communities (see also Policy CS10 above).

7.4 Maintaining quality environments

- 7.4.1** This section addresses wildlife and nature conservation, the historic heritage, and landscape, townscape and design.
- 7.4.2** Much of the Plan area is of high environmental quality. Government policy as set out in Planning Policy Statement PPS1 'Delivering Sustainable Development' sets out the Government's requirement that sustainable development should in both rural and urban areas:
- Enhance as well as protect biodiversity, natural habitats, the historic environment and landscape and townscape character.
 - Promote communities which are inclusive, healthy, safe and crime free.

Wildlife and nature conservation

You told us:

We should protect the landscape and natural habitats, managing and minimising the impact of development, including small scale development. We should be identifying and conserving distinctive features of the natural environment (e.g. hedgerows), and managing the impacts of recreational pressures on the National Park.

- 7.4.3** The Plan Area contains substantial areas of local, national, European and international nature conservation value - see paragraph 6.23 and Figures 15 and 16 above. These sites are vulnerable to pressures arising from development, recreational use, land management, pollution and climate change. The condition of the SSSIs in the Plan Area as assessed by English Nature (now part of Natural England) in 2005 indicated that 34% were in favourable condition, 26% were in unfavourable condition but stable, 14% were in unfavourable condition but recovering, and 25% were in unfavourable condition and declining.
- 7.4.4** The Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act (2006) introduced a duty for public authorities to have regard to conservation of biodiversity in exercising their functions. PPS9 'Biodiversity and Geological Conservation' requires that plan policies and planning decisions should aim to maintain, and enhance, restore or add to biodiversity and geological conservation interests and sustain the natural physical processes on which they depend. The Habitats Regulations control developments likely to affect sites of European importance. The UK Biodiversity Action Plan identifies habitats and species of national importance that need to be conserved and enhanced.
- 7.4.5** The South East Plan protects designated nature conservation sites, habitats and species, urban wildlife, and opportunities for biodiversity improvement, enhancement and creation. It also seeks to protect and enhance the region's woodlands, and identifies Areas of Strategic Opportunity for Biodiversity Improvement and related biodiversity targets.
- 7.4.6** Hampshire Biodiversity Action Plan identifies habitats and species within Hampshire that reflect national and local priorities for biodiversity conservation and enhancement. A New Forest Biodiversity Action Plan is in preparation that will provide further details about local biodiversity priorities.

- 7.4.7** The District Council's emerging revised Community Strategy has priorities to restore damaged habitats, support land management which sustains the special character of the area, improve understanding and manage the effects of development on the natural environment.

Policy Outline CS24 - wildlife and nature conservation

The Preferred Option is to work with Natural England, Hampshire County Council, the Hampshire Wildlife Trust and the New Forest National Park Authority to:

- apply relevant national and regional policy to ensure the protection and enhancement of sites subject to international, European, national and local biodiversity designations;
- assist in achieving national, county and local biodiversity targets as set out in the Hampshire and New Forest Biodiversity Action Plans by:
 - seeking the enhancement, restoration and creation of biodiversity native to this District in all forms of development, including measures to adapt to the consequences of climate change;
 - encouraging land management practices that restore or enhance designated sites and native biodiversity including creating new sites;
- protecting networks of natural habitats to be identified through the local Biodiversity Action Plan, e.g. by including them in access routes and areas of natural green space identified through work on green infrastructure (see Section 7.5);
- extend specific protection to important trees and hedgerows including those not currently included within designated sites;
- support an ongoing programme of survey of habitats and species, and designation of Sites of Importance for Nature Conservation (through the Sites and Designations DPD);
- encourage and develop public understanding of biodiversity e.g. through the New Forest Biodiversity Action Plan, and enabling public access to designated sites for the purpose of interpretation and understanding where feasible without harm to nature conservation interests.

Design, Landscape, Townscape and Historic Heritage

You told us:

Conserving the distinctiveness of the cultural heritage of the area was important to you. You want us to protect landscape character and important local buildings in addition to 'listed buildings'. You want us to identify areas which need improvement in towns and villages. You wanted to see a balance between higher densities of development and protecting local character.

- 7.4.8** Chapter 2 described the generally high quality of the Plan Area's environment and its heritage.

7.4.9 Relevant national legislation and planning policy guidance is set out in many places including:

- the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990;
- the Ancient Monuments and Archaeological Areas Act 1979 (as amended);
- PPSI 'Delivering Sustainable Development' requires planning authorities to promote safe, healthy and attractive environments, and high quality, inclusive design of new development that improves the character and quality of the built environment;
- PPS3 'Housing' and its companion document 'Better Places to Live By Design' which contain detailed guidance on the design of residential development, including design to improve accessibility for disabled people and to reduce opportunities for crime;
- PPS6 'Town Centres' which emphasises the need for high quality and safe environments in town centres;
- PPS7 'Sustainable Development in Rural Areas' which seeks to raise the quality of life and the environment in rural areas by various means including good quality development that reflects local distinctiveness and intrinsic qualities of the countryside;
- PPS10 'Planning for Sustainable Waste Management' requires design and layout of new development to help to secure opportunities for sustainable waste management;
- PPG15, 'Planning and the Historic Environment' as amended by Circulars 1/01, 9/05 and 1/07;
- PPG 16 'Archaeology and Planning'; and
- PPG20 'Coastal planning' which refers to the need to protect, conserve and enhance the coastal landscape.

7.4.10 The submitted South East Plan requires conservation and enhancement of the character, distinctiveness, and sense of place of settlements and landscapes. (Policy CC12). In seeking to intensify the use of existing urban land (Policy BE2), it seeks policies that enable high quality development that respects local character and distinctiveness, and that identify opportunities for higher density schemes (Policy BE1), referring to the need for a shared community vision of local character. Policy W2 states that LDDs will require development layouts and designs that provide adequate space for waste management. The SE Plan requires local planning authorities to protect and enhance the character of small country towns (Policy BE5). It also requires conservation and enhancement of the natural beauty of AONBs, and landscape and countryside management outside the nationally designated areas that protects and enhances the distinctive qualities of the countryside.

7.4.11 New Forest District's emerging revised Community Strategy contains priorities to identify and protect distinctive valued local character and landscapes; to increase engagement with the historic environment; to promote understanding of good design, to identify and, and to provide a safe and secure environment; it also seeks to maintain valued landscapes. The existing adopted New Forest District Local Plan First Alteration identifies 'Areas of Special Character' within the built-up areas, and 'Landscape Features' within and adjoining the built-up areas that reflect locally valued characteristics of the area. An adopted Supplementary Planning Document 'Housing design, density and character' establishes principles of designs sensitive to the character of built-up areas in the Plan Area. Village Design Statements and Community Plans are identifying features and characteristics of the area that are valued by local communities.

7.4.12 Sustainable construction and renewable energy generation considerations (as dealt with in Section 7.1 above) are likely to require more innovative designs and materials in new buildings. Further important factors are:

- accessibility - ensuring that buildings and public spaces are accessible to all members of the community, including those with disabilities and infirm elderly people;
- community safety - even though local crime rates are relatively low, there are pockets of criminal activity in some of the urban areas and there is a local fear of crime that is disproportionate to its occurrence.

Policy Outline CS25 - Design, Landscape, Townscape and Historic Heritage

The Preferred Option is to:

- apply national and regional policies in respect of the design, landscape, townscape and historic heritage;
- ensure that so far as possible, new development contributes to local distinctiveness and sense of place, and is appropriate and sympathetic to its setting in terms of scale, height, massing and density, and its relationship to adjoining buildings and landscape features;
- promote local understanding of good design, including the implications of innovative building methods and materials associated with sustainable construction and generation of renewable energy;
- work with local communities to identify and protect additional areas and features of local heritage value and to ensure that features and characteristics that are valued locally and which contribute to local distinctiveness are identified, protected and where possible enhanced. This will include review of Areas of Special Character and landscape features through other Development Plan Documents;
- produce Conservation Area appraisals and management plans, including enhancements such as environmental improvements, traffic management, etc;
- work with landowners and developers to ensure land management practices to protect and enhance valued landscapes, and to restore landscapes where valued features and habitats have been lost or degraded; and
- ensure that new development is accessible to those with disabilities, and designed to minimise opportunities for anti-social and criminal behaviour;
- provide for car-parking in a way that secures a high quality environment, taking into account the relatively high levels of car ownership.

7.5 Creating Healthy and Safe Communities

7.5.1 This section covers leisure and recreation, community facilities and social inclusion, and pollution and major hazards. Other aspects of community safety are addressed in Sections 7.1 (flood risk) and 7.4 (limiting opportunities for crime through design and layout).

Leisure and Recreation

You told us:

Managing the impacts of recreational pressures on the National Park was important to you. You would like to see some further investment in local leisure facilities. Only half of you thought it would be a good idea to have new country park in the eastern part of the Plan area.

7.5.2 The Plan Area contains a wide range of sports, leisure and recreation facilities. There are District Council indoor sports facilities including swimming pools in all the main towns, some associated with schools and colleges, and a range of private clubs. In the smaller settlements, community halls provide a range of indoor leisure activities. Most of the towns and larger villages have access to outdoor sports facilities, although standards of provision vary across the District. There are many areas of informal open space, again with variations in standards of provision. Most outdoor recreation facilities are maintained by Town and Parish Councils, although a number are in private ownership. There is some joint use of school sports facilities.

7.5.3 The Plan Area also caters for a range of other recreational pursuits, including sailing, fishing, riding, cycling, golf etc. The New Forest is used extensively for informal recreation (mainly walking and dog-walking) by residents of the Plan Area. The Draft Habitats Regulations Assessment (Background Paper BP20) identifies this as a potential issue in terms of pressures on the vulnerable European habitats of the National Park, and identifies a need for mitigation in the form of provision of alternative natural green space for informal recreational use.

7.5.4 Government guidance on recreation and open space is provided in PPG17 'Planning for Open Space, Sport and Recreation'. PPG17 emphasises the importance of open space in underpinning people's quality of life, and advises local planning authorities to retain open space, sport and recreation facilities, use planning obligations to remedy local deficiencies, and ensure that recreation facilities are accessible by various means. It also requires local authorities to set their own open space standards rather than relying on national standards.

7.5.5 The submitted South East Plan indicates that LDFs have a role to play in maintaining healthy and sustainable communities by ensuring community access to amenities such as parks, open spaces, physical recreation activity and cultural facilities. In addition a Green Infrastructure Strategy is currently being produced for the South Hampshire Sub Region. The District Council is fully engaged with PUSH in the development of this strategy.

7.5.6 The District's emerging revised Community Strategy has a priority to encourage people to be more active. It also seeks to make the most of local

leisure facilities, improve accessibility to them and manage recreational pressures. The Council is in the process of producing a 'Visitor and Recreation Strategy' to focus on access management which will be informed by work that is being carried out by Hampshire County Council, the Forestry Commission and Natural England.

7.5.7 In preparing the Core Strategy, New Forest District Council (and the National Park Authority) commissioned consultants to undertake an audit of all open space, sport and recreation facilities (Background Paper BP4) as recommended in PPG17. The Preferred Option is based on the consultants' recommendations as follows:

- Revised classification of open space, and new quantitative standards of provision
- Making better community use of school sports facilities
- Quality and access standards
- A need to reduce recreational pressures on sensitive areas of the New Forest National Park

7.5.8 The current standard of open space provision is 2.8ha per 1000 people. The consultants recommend an increase to 4.0ha per 1000 people, as follows:

Fig. 23: Existing levels and standards of open space provision, and Consultants' proposed standards of provision (ha/000)

Type of Open Space	Existing levels of provision	Existing standards of provision	Suggested new standards of provision
Informal Open Space	2.12	0.4	2.30 (1)
Space for Children	0.05	0.8	0.20
Space for Young People	0.01		
Outdoor Sports Facilities	1.15	1.6	1.25
Allotments	0.13	N/A	0.30
Total Open Space	3.44	2.80	4.00 (1)

[Source: PPG17 Consultants' Report]

(1) Including 0.1 hectares of provision towards a country park

MAKING BETTER COMMUNITY USE OF SCHOOL SPORTS FACILITIES

7.5.9 In order to help achieve better standards of outdoor sporting provision, there is a strong recommendation to make better use of school sports facilities. This could bring mutual benefits, particularly if developer contributions can be used to help improve facilities.

QUALITY AND ACCESS STANDARDS

7.5.10 The quality of open space has a direct impact upon levels of use and enjoyment. Well-maintained and safe areas of open space are a greater asset

and resource for local communities than poorly maintained areas which attract antisocial behaviour. The consultants' report indicates potential for improvement of open spaces in each parish. If such initiatives could be addressed through local recreation strategies/community plans which can be adopted by the District Council as SPD, developer contributions could be sought for implementation.

7.5.11 In promoting social inclusion and healthy living it is important that all communities have adequate access to natural green space and other sporting and recreational facilities, preferably by means other than the car. In terms of natural green space, countryside and coastal areas in the district provide an important recreational resource; the consultants report noted the popularity of recreation areas that included access to water. The southern coastal area has good coastal access, but in the Waterside, access to the coast is more restricted because of the major industrial sites. The consultants propose accessibility standards in terms of travel time by alternative modes.

7.5.12 In deriving the recommended access standards, the consultants have used Natural England's "Access to Natural Greenspace Standards (ANGSt)".

A NEED TO REDUCE RECREATIONAL PRESSURES ON SENSITIVE AREAS OF THE NEW FOREST NATIONAL PARK

7.5.13 In order to help relieve pressure on sensitive parts of the New Forest, the consultants suggest improving local access to other forms of natural green space e.g. informal open space, access to the countryside and coast, and potentially the provision of a country park to the east of the National Park (including locations beyond New Forest District). These recommendations are being considered through joint work with neighbouring authorities including the Partnership for Urban South Hampshire (PUSH) strategy on Green Infrastructure.

Policy Outline CS26: Open Space, Sport and Recreation

The Preferred Option is to work with Town and Parish councils, the Education Authority, school managers, Hampshire County Council, the Partnership for Urban South Hampshire, landowners and community groups to:

- meet local open space needs by seeking improvements to the quantity, quality and accessibility of open spaces and recreation facilities in and adjoining each settlement in order to progress towards the quantitative standards set out in Figure 23 above;
- ensure that new residential development makes provision for open space and play facilities, to a minimum standard of 4.0 hectares per 1000 population, and/or improvements to existing open space and recreation facilities;
- improve the quality and make best use of existing facilities, and achieve more community use of school sports facilities through community use agreements;
- improve accessibility to the wider countryside and the coast (particularly along Southampton Water);
- help to produce a Green Infrastructure Strategy for the South Hampshire Sub Region.

(See also Policy Outline CS29)

- 7.5.14** The District Council intends to produce a Supplementary Planning Document to provide detailed qualitative and accessibility standards for open space and recreational facilities within the framework set by this policy.

Community Facilities and Social Inclusion

You told us:

Some of you thought that there was a need for additional community facilities in some towns and villages. Your responses told us that meeting the needs of children, young people, and older people were important to you.

- 7.5.15** Community facilities include education, health and social service facilities, public and emergency services, village halls, community buildings, social clubs, libraries, cultural facilities, places of worship, allotments and cemeteries. Paragraph 2.12 above and Appendix 7 set out the existing provision.
- 7.5.16** National policy on community facilities and on planning considerations regarding social deprivation is in PPS 1, 'Delivering Sustainable Development'. The submitted South East plan provides further detailed guidance on community facilities, with policies on 'Supporting Healthy Communities' (Policy S3), 'Education and Skills' (Policy S5), 'Higher and Further Education' (Policy S6), 'Community Infrastructure' (Policy S8) and addressing social deprivation (Policy S1).
- 7.5.17** The emerging revised Community Strategy contains priorities to assist children, older people and other sections of the community with access to facilities and resources, including measures to improve health. No requirements for major new education, health or social service facilities have emerged through the Future Matters Issues and Options consultation or from the Local Strategic Partnership. The Council is working closely with local people preparing Village and Town Plans, and this may identify concerns about the adequacy of local facilities, which may need to be addressed. The call on medical and care facilities which meet the needs of the increasing numbers of elderly people living in the District is likely to increase during the plan period.
- 7.5.18** There are areas of relative deprivation within the Plan Area (see paragraph 2.15 above). The District Council works with the Primary Care Trust and others to address issues arising from deprivation. Participatory Needs Assessment (PNA) work is already underway in Milton, Pennington, and Calshot to address the needs of the local populations. This is achieved through the employment of a community worker to help communities identify their needs and help find ways of meeting those needs. In addition to CS27 below, a number of policies in this Core Strategy address aspects of tackling deprivation, in particular those relating to transport (paragraphs 6.90 - 6.102), affordable housing (Section 7.2), and leisure and recreation (paragraphs 7.5.2 - 7.5.14).

Policy Outline CS27 - Community facilities and Social Deprivation

The Preferred Option is to work with the Local Strategic Partnership, Town and Parish councils, community groups and other stakeholders to:

- help maintain the appropriate level of education, health, social and other community service provision to meet local needs;
- help provide accessible facilities to meet health, education, and social needs, in particular those of older and younger people;
- encourage innovative means of service provision in rural communities and other areas with poor public transport access; and
- identify areas of particular social deprivation that need focused attention.

Pollution and Major Hazards

You told us:

Reducing all forms of pollution - including air, noise and waste, was important to you.

7.5.19 The Plan Area contains a number of installations and forms of infrastructure that can give rise to various forms of pollution (including noise), and involve the use of hazardous substances or explosives (see paragraphs 6.34 - 6.35). Parts of the Plan Area are particularly sensitive to some forms of pollution, and there are communities and nature conservation interests in close proximity to sources of both pollution and major hazards.

7.5.20 The Environmental Protection Act 1990, the Water Resources Act 1991 and the Pollution Prevention and Control Act 1999 are the primary sources of legislation for controlling pollution. The Planning (Hazardous Substances) Act 1990 (as amended) controls hazardous substances. Government guidance on pollution is given in PPS23 'Planning and Pollution Control' and PPG24 'Planning and Noise' and Circular 04/00 'Planning Controls for Hazardous Substances'.

7.5.21 The submitted South East Plan contains policies to maintain water quality and control water pollution, and requires local authorities to seek an improvement in air quality in their areas. It also suggests the development of measures to control noise pollution.

7.5.22 High traffic related air pollution (nitrogen dioxide) levels have resulted in statutory air quality management areas being declared for Totton (Junction Road area). A Draft Air Quality Action Plan has been prepared and it is anticipated that it will be adopted.

Policy Outline CS28: Pollution and Major Hazards

The Preferred Option is to work with relevant authorities and agencies (including the Environment Agency and the Health and Safety Executive) to minimise the impacts of pollution and major hazards, and to ensure that new development does not prejudice public safety or create unacceptable impacts on people, nature conservation or other environmental interests.

8. Developers' contributions

- 8.1** New development often creates a need for new or improved infrastructure and community facilities (such as open space, roads, footpaths etc) without which the development could have a detrimental impact upon amenity, safety or the environment. Development can also help to achieve the objectives of the plan, for example by providing affordable housing, a coherent footpath and cycleway network and improvements to the environment.
- 8.2** Planning obligations are legally binding agreements between a local authority and a developer/landowner through which the developer/landowner makes the contributions necessary to support their development and achieve the plan objectives. They include legal agreements made under Section 106 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990, and/or obligations under other legislation, for example, Section 278 of the Highways Act 1980. Circular 05/2005 provides guidance to local authorities on the use of planning obligations. Both the Circular and the submitted South East Plan advise that policies for high level planning obligations should be included in Local Development Documents.
- 8.3** The Government has been consulting on possible changes to planning obligations through use of a Planning Gain Supplement. A variety of alternatives are being considered including flat rate development tariffs. Hampshire County Council is developing proposals for a new transport contributions policy.
- 8.4** The District Council will continue to use both planning conditions and planning obligations to secure infrastructure necessary to support new development, and to achieve plan objectives. Where it is not possible to provide infrastructure on site, or in order to meet the wider plan objectives, contributions are likely to be sought for:
- Off-site highway and other transport infrastructure improvements, including provision for public transport where appropriate
 - Car parking
 - Footpaths and cycleways
 - Surface water drainage infrastructure
 - Flood defences
 - Environmental improvements
 - Waste management
 - Affordable housing
 - Education provision
 - Community facilities (including health) and community safety
 - Recreation provision, including public open space, play and sports facilities
 - Nature conservation and wildlife mitigation measures, including in relation to the National Park
 - Commuted payments for maintenance of facilities provided
 - Public realm provision (including public art)
 - Local labour and training initiatives
 - Offsetting carbon emissions through contributions to renewable energy or energy efficiency schemes/measures

Clearly, not every development will have to provide all these forms of infrastructure; requirements will vary depending on the scale, type and location of the proposal, and the particular needs of the development concerned.

- 8.5** Planning agreements will be drafted by the District Council with the developer being responsible for the costs resulting from administering and monitoring the agreement.

Policy Outline CS29: Developers' contributions

The Preferred Option is to ensure that development proposals:

- Meet the reasonable cost of new infrastructure required as a consequence of the proposal (see paragraph 8.4 above);
- Where appropriate, contribute to the delivery of strategic infrastructure to enable the cumulative impacts of developments to be managed in the most effective way, including identified transport infrastructure requirements;
- Provide for the ongoing maintenance of facilities provided as a result of the development; and
- Contribute to the achievement of plan objectives such as the provision of affordable housing and alternative transport modes.

The mechanism by which developers' contributions are achieved will be reviewed in the light of changes in national policy. Tariff-based approaches will be considered where this would simplify procedures.

9. Implementation and Monitoring

- 9.1** An important part of preparing the Core Strategy is putting in place adequate processes to monitor the implementation of the plan. It is essential to check that the plan is being implemented satisfactorily and to monitor whether the outcomes from its implementation are as intended. The main way to check and report on the implementation of the Plan is through the production of an Annual Monitoring Report (AMR).
- 9.2** The District Council has produced an AMR since 2001 relating to its Local Plans. Recent AMRs have included information relating to the Local Development Framework process including reporting progress in producing Development Plan Documents set against the programme in the Local Development Scheme (LDS). As the various Development Plan Documents (DPDs) are adopted the AMR will monitor the objectives, policies and proposals contained within them. However, given that each DPD will supersede different parts of the Local Plan there will be a period of transition during which DPDs and elements of the Local Plan will continue to be monitored together in the AMR.
- 9.3** Previous AMRs have included a Housing Trajectory which is a forecast of housing delivery set against requirements. Housing delivery is afforded high priority by government and will be a key component of monitoring the implementation of the LDF. A Housing Trajectory based on the provision proposed in this Preferred Options document is set out below. Recently issued Government advice requires local planning authorities to produce Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessments. The Council will produce one, setting out the programme for delivering housing, when it submits its Core Strategy next year.
- 9.4** In accordance with national guidance, monitoring will continue to assess progress in achieving the Plan Objectives. The contributions of the policies of the Core Strategy and subsequent Development Plan Documents in achieving these objectives will also be monitored. Where practicable, targets relating to the implementation of policies will be established and progress towards achieving these targets will be measured using indicators. Different types of indicators will be used, including:
- contextual indicators - relating to the social, economic and environmental conditions in the district; and
 - output indicators - measurable changes and outcomes resulting from implementing planning policies.

9.5 The format of the Annual Monitoring Report will be as follows:

Plan Objective	Objectives of the Plan / Core Strategy
Policies	Policies in the Plan or Development Plan Document relating to the objective
Responsible Agency	The bodies responsible for implementation e.g. District Council / County Council / Private sector
Targets	Targets for implementing the policies (where practicable)
Indicators	What is used to measure or assess implementation of policies and objectives (contextual / local output / core output)
Data Source	Where the data used in the indicators will be drawn from

Fig. 24: Housing Trajectory

