

## 2. Plan Area profile and strategic context

### Introduction

2.1. The Plan Area is characterised by a dispersed pattern of small to medium sized towns and villages within attractive countryside and coastal landscapes. It comprises three separate sub-areas around the edges of the New Forest National Park on the south coast between the city of Southampton and Bournemouth (see figure 2.1). The Plan Area contains 32% of the New Forest District Council area, and 81% of the District population. The rest of the District lies within the New Forest National Park Authority Local Plan area.

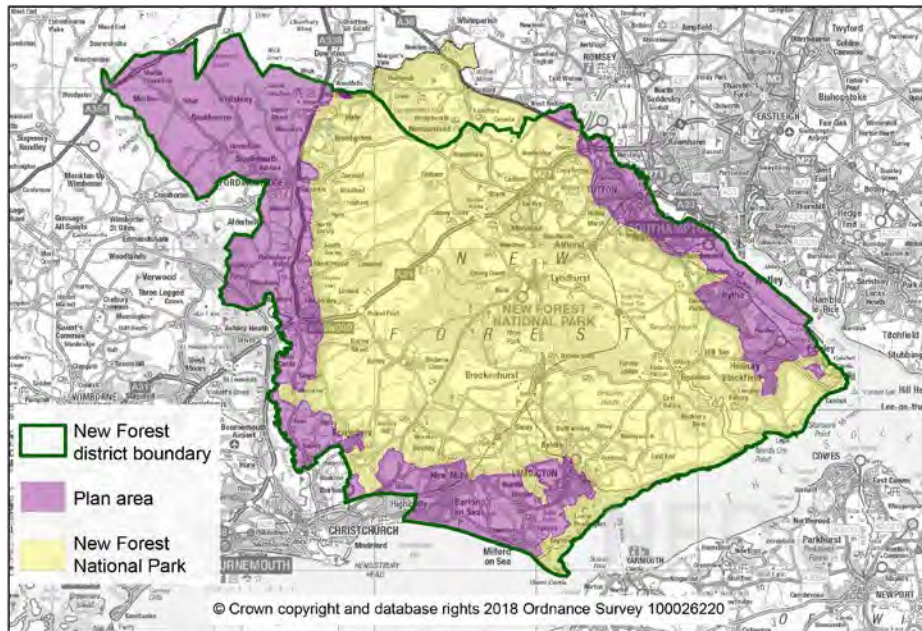


Figure 2.1 The Plan Area in relation to New Forest District and National Park

### Strategic context

2.2. Key Diagram on the following page shows the Plan Area in strategic context.

#### Relationship to the New Forest National Park

2.3. Historically much of the District was part of the New Forest Heritage Area which pre-dated the formation of the National Park, where successive county and regional plans recognised a need for development constraint.

2.4. In planning for the District area outside the National Park there is a statutory duty to have regard to the purposes of National Parks<sup>9</sup>:

- to conserve and enhance the natural beauty, wildlife and cultural heritage of the National Park
- to promote opportunities for the understanding and enjoyment of the special qualities of the National Park by the public.

2.5. The New Forest National Park is in close proximity to most of the main settlements in the Plan Area, and this Local Plan has been prepared in close cooperation with the New Forest National Park Authority, including joint production of key parts of the evidence base. Sites allocated for development in the Local Plan are predominantly on the settlement edge of towns and villages in areas with strong rural character, in some cases located on the National Park boundary.

<sup>9</sup> Section 62 of the Environment Act 1995

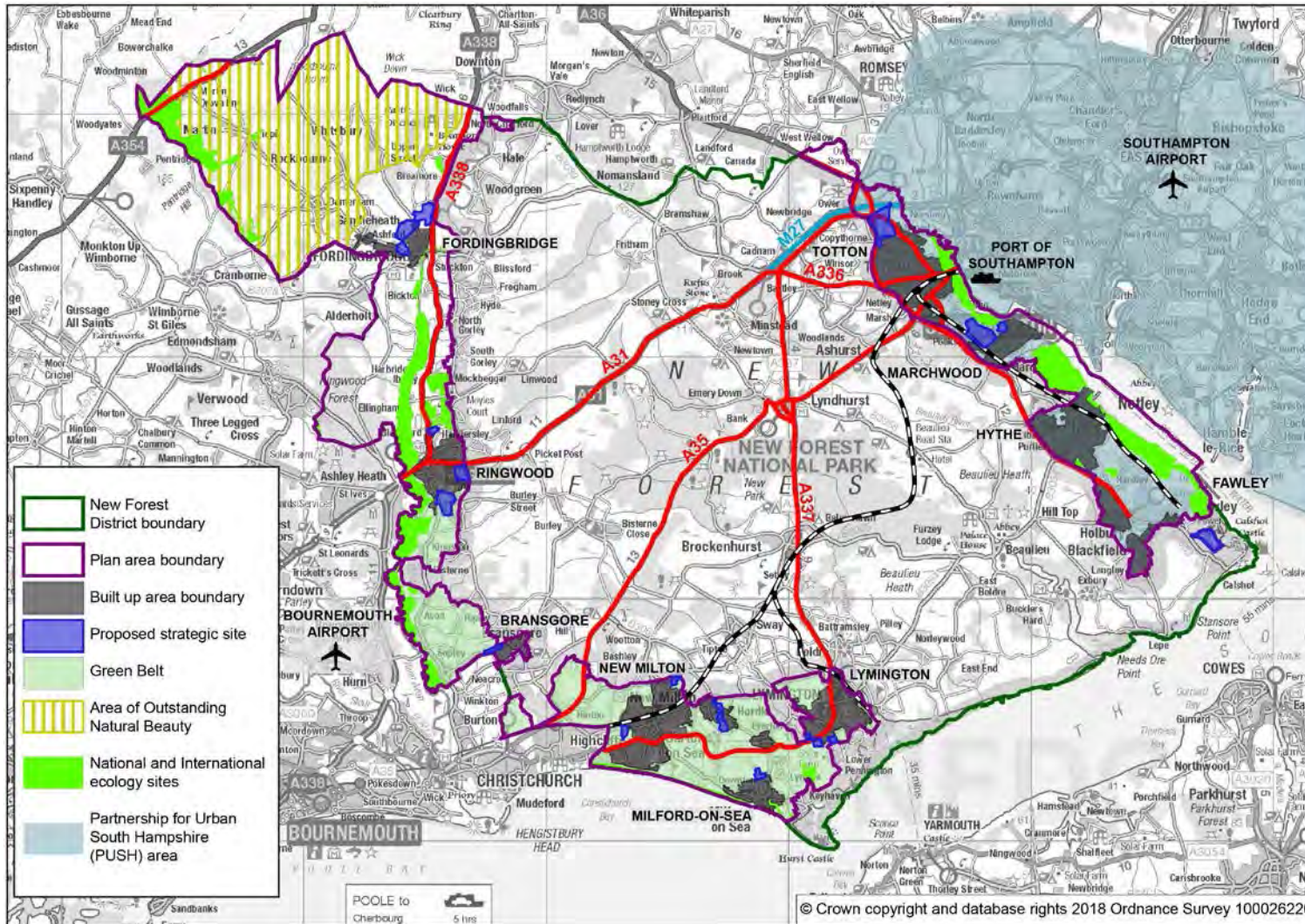


Figure 2.2 Key Diagram



## Housing markets and economic areas

2.6. The Plan Area is partly within three housing market and travel-to-work areas, which overlap to some extent: Southampton, Bournemouth and to a lesser extent Salisbury.

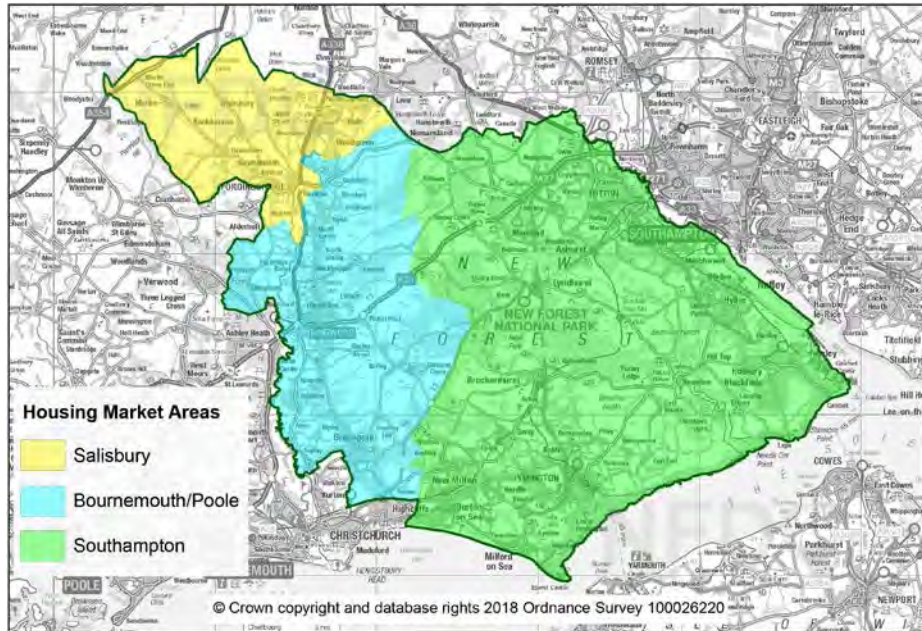


Figure 2.2 The Plan Area in relation to housing market areas

2.7. The Totton and the Waterside sub-area is within the **Partnership for Urban South Hampshire** (PUSH) area (fig 2.3) and forms part of the Solent Local Economic Partnership (LEP) and Southampton Housing Market Area. The rest of the Plan Area is within the Enterprise M3 LEP.

2.8. New Forest District Council is a member of PUSH, which has a significant history of cooperative working on strategic planning matters. This Local Plan has had regard to the LEP Economic Strategies, and to the **PUSH Spatial Position Statement 2016**<sup>10</sup>, which provides a non-statutory framework to help guide and co-ordinate Local Plans prepared by individual local planning authorities in the PUSH area.

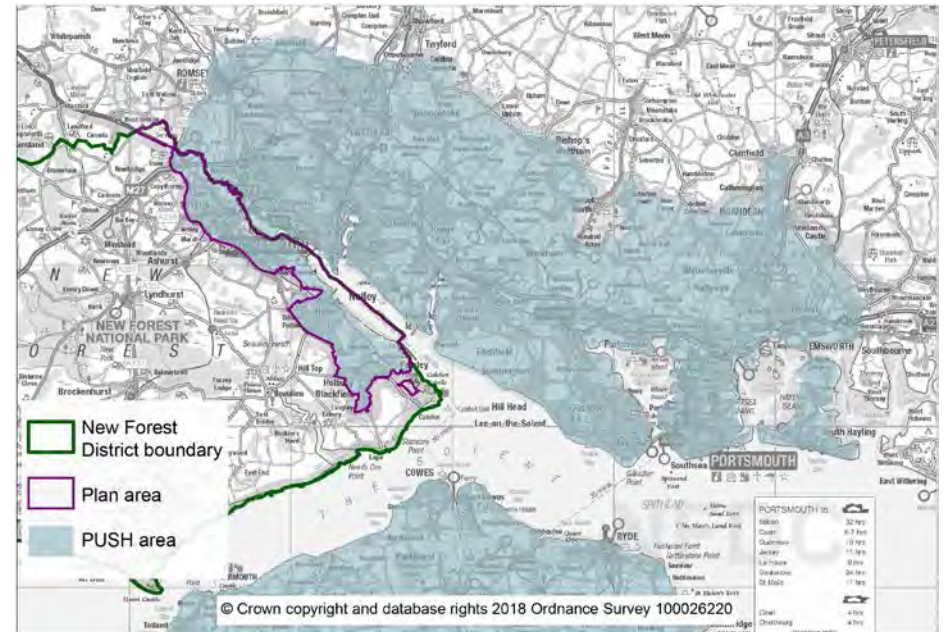


Figure 2.3 PUSH and Solent LEP area

<sup>10</sup> <http://www.push.gov.uk/work/planning-and-infrastructure/push-spatial-position-statement-to-2034-2.htm>

## The environment

2.9. The National Planning Policy Framework (the NPPF) sets out a presumption in favour of sustainable development, including that Local Plans should meet identified needs unless specific policies in the NPPF indicate development should be restricted.

2.10. The policy examples referenced<sup>11</sup> in the NPPF include those policies relating to sites protected under the Birds and Habitats Directives (collectively called 'International Nature Conservation sites' in this Local Plan), and/or designated as Sites of Special Scientific Interest; land designated as Green Belt, Local Green Space, Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty, Heritage Coast or land within a National Park, designated heritage assets, and locations at risk of flooding or coastal erosion.

2.11. Within the Plan Area the Habitats Regulations Assessment has shown that all residential development will have an impact on International Nature Conservation sites, and this significantly affects how or whether a presumption in favour of sustainable development<sup>12</sup> can be applied to planning decisions.

2.12. The Plan Area is relatively small, and a small proportion of the Plan Area is free from the type of constraints that, based on the NPPF, may justify restricting development (as illustrated in Figures 2.4 and 2.5). The extent of restrictive designations and significant policy constraints effectively means that much of the Plan Area is either an inappropriate

location for built development, and/or should only be considered for development in exceptional circumstances. For example:

- 12% is with a National or International Nature Conservation site designated<sup>13</sup> for its nature conservation significance
- 28% is designated an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB)
- 21% is Green Belt
- 17% is already built up, with relatively limited opportunities for brownfield redevelopment<sup>14</sup> other than at the former Fawley Power Station site
- Around 15% is at risk of flooding or erosion (flood zones 2 or 3)

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<sup>11</sup> NPPF paragraph 14 and footnote 9, or footnote 7 of the draft NPPF revisions

<sup>12</sup> NPPF paragraph 119

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<sup>13</sup> SPA: Special Protection Areas, SAC: Special Areas of Conservation, Ramsar Convention sites, SSSI: Sites of Special Scientific Interest, NNR National Nature Reserves.

<sup>14</sup> Brownfield Land Register <http://www.newforest.gov.uk/article/17031/Local-Plan-Review-supporting-documents-and-evidence-base>



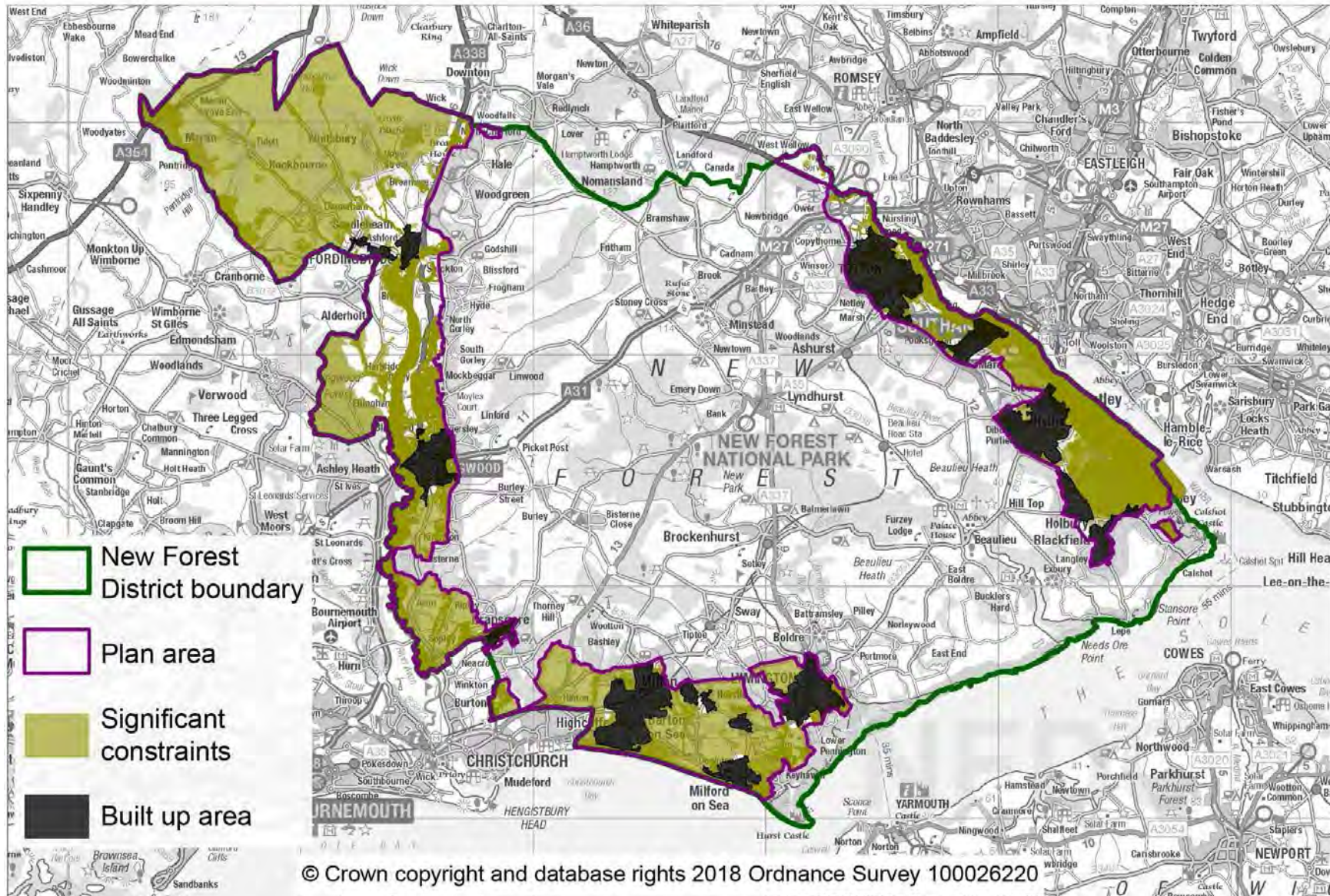
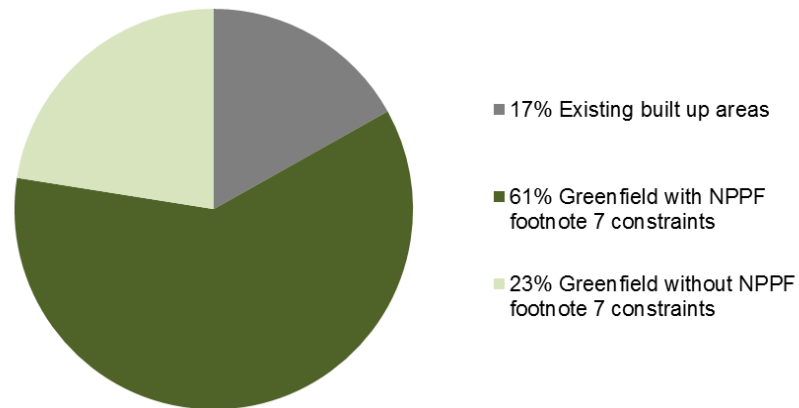


Figure 2.5 Proportion of the Plan Area already developed or affected by significant constraints

2.13. Taking into account land within the Inner Consultation Zone identified by the Health and Safety Executive for certain potentially hazardous military or industrial activities or materials<sup>15</sup>, just 19% of the undeveloped land in the Plan Area is not directly affected by a significantly constraining national policy, safety or environmental constraint. Of this approximately 4,500 hectares of greenfield land around 950 hectares have locally identified habitat or wildlife value<sup>16</sup>, around 210 hectares are within the strategic land reserve for the Port of Southampton at Dibden Bay, and around 470 hectares are allocated for development in this Local Plan. The majority of the remaining area without significant constraints is in relatively remote rural locations in the Avon Valley and Downlands sub-area.



<sup>15</sup> <http://www.hse.gov.uk/landuseplanning/about.htm>

<sup>16</sup> Local Nature Reserves and Sites of Importance for Nature Conservation identified by Hampshire County Council