Nathaniel Lichfield and Partners

Planning Design Economics

**JOINT RETAIL ASSESSMENT**

**Christchurch  Borough Council**
**East Dorset District**
**North Dorset District Council**
**Purbeck District Council**

**VOLUME 2: CHRISTCHURCH**

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### Appendices

## GLOSSARY OF TERMS

| | |
|---|---|
| Class A1 | Commercial units classed as retail or shop uses within the Use Classes Order**.** |
| Class A1 Services | Non-retail uses classed as A1 within the Use Classes Order, such as hairdressers, travel agents and dry cleaners. |
| Class A2 | Commercial units classed as financial or professional services, for example banks and building societies, within the Use Classes Order. |
| Class A3/A4/A5 | Commercial units classed as food or drink outlets, for example pubs, restaurants and takeaways, within the Use Classes Order. |
| Convenience Goods | Consumer goods purchased on a regular basis, including food and groceries and cleaning materials. |
| Comparison Goods | Durable goods such as clothing, household goods, furniture, DIY and electrical goods. |
| Experian | A data consultancy who are widely used for retail planning information. |
| EGI | Estates Gazette Interactive is a published source of information providing known retail and leisure operators' space requirements in towns across the country. |
| Goad Plans | Town centre plans prepared by Experian, which is based on occupier surveys of over 1,200 town centres across the country. |
| Gross floorspace | Total external floorspace including exterior walls**.** |
| Higher order comparison goods | Durable goods which tend to be high value, bought on an occasional basis and/or where customers are most likely to shop around and compare products in different shops e.g. adult fashion items, high value electrical goods, jewellery, furniture etc. Customers are usually prepared to travel further to purchase these items. |
| Lower order comparison goods | Durable goods which tend to be lower value, bought on a regular basis and/or where customers are less likely to shop around e.g. small household goods, books, pharmaceutical and toiletries. Customers are less likely to travel long distances to purchase these items. |
| Market share Penetration rate | The proportion of total consumer expenditure within a given area taken by a particular town centre or shopping facility. |
| Multiple traders | National or regional *'chain store'* retailers. |
| Net floorspace | Retail floorspace devoted to the sale of goods, excluding storage space. |
| Zone A Rent | The annual rental charge per square foot for the first 20 foot depth of a shop unit, which is the most suitable measure for standardising and comparing rental levels |

## 1.0 INTRODUCTION

### The Study

1.1 Nathaniel Lichfield & Partners (NLP) was commissioned by Christchurch, East Dorset, North Dorset and Purbeck Councils to prepare a joint town centre and retail study, including an assessment of the main town and district centres within the four local authority areas. This Volume 2 report relates to Christchurch.

### Content of the Report

1.2 The Study has been split into two volumes. This Volume 2 report should be read along side the Volume 1 report, which includes the macro analysis covering all four authority areas. Volume 2 is split into four separate reports for each authority.

1.3 Section 2.0 of Volume 1 provides an overview of the local planning policy context. Section 3.0 describes existing shopping facilities within Christchurch. Sections 4.0 and 5.0 sets out centre health checks for Christchurch town centre and Highcliffe district centre. Section 6.0 provides an audit of the local centres. Section 7.0 examines potential development sites in the two main centres. Section 8.0 sets out our recommendations and conclusions.

1.4 As part of the Study process a series of workshops were held across the study area, including a workshop in Christchurch, where the key findings were presented and discussed with key stakeholders. The summaries of these discussions are contained in Appendix B.

## 2.0 LOCAL PLANNING POLICY CONTEXT

### Introduction

2.1 The national and regional policy context is set out in Volume 1.

2.2 The Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 introduced legislation to replace local plans with local development frameworks (LDFs). Work on LDFs has started for all the Councils within the study area with each authority at various stages of progression. In September 2007, the Councils were required to seek agreement from the Government Office for the South West to 'save' individual policies within the Local Plan until such a time when they are replaced by each relevant LDF.

2.3 Policies within this local policy context section only include those which have been 'saved' since September 2007.

*Christchurch Local Plan (2001)*

2.4 Following national planning guidance, new retail proposals should follow a sequential approach for seeking the location of new developments. Policy ES1 states that outside of core, secondary and local shopping areas, new retail development including extensions to existing units shall only be permitted if:

- *the need for the additional facility is demonstrated;*
- *it can be demonstrated that all potential sites falling within the policies ES2 – ES8 areas have been thoroughly assessed by the sequential approach;*
- *it can be shown that either alone or combined with other existing or proposed development it will sustain and enhance the vitality and viability of the core, secondary and local areas as a whole;*
- *the development will be readily accessible from existing or proposed public transport route(s), and will be readily accessible by bicycle and to pedestrians; and*
- *the environment and amenities of users and occupants of nearby land or premises are not adversely affected by noise or disturbance or by loss of privacy or light.*

2.5 Within the Christchurch Local Plan boundaries, retail activity should be consolidated within existing commercial areas to maintain their viability and vitality. Activity should be concentrated within the following areas:

- *Saxon square/High Street/Church Street/Castle Street*
- *Bargates*
- *Barrack Road*
- *Purewell*
- *Highcliffe*

2.6 Policy ES2 of the Local Plan states that within the Saxon Square, Church Street, Wick Lane, and High Street core and the cores at Bargates and Highcliffe planning permission for the change of use of existing ground floor retail premises (Class A1) to non-retail uses will be permitted in the following cases:

- *The proposed use is for a financial or professional service (A2), food or drink (A3), non residential institutions (D1) or leisure and entertainment (D2);*

- *Non retail uses (other than A1) will not cumulatively amount to more than 20%of all ground floor units in each of the identified areas;*

- *The proposal will not result in more than three continuous frontages in non-retail use (other than A1);*

- *A shop front appearance will be retained.*

2.7 Within the Local Plan policy ES3 states that the proposal for change of use of existing non-residential premises located within the secondary cores at Highcliffe, Bargates, Castle Street, Bridge Street, Barrack Road and Purewell will be permitted provided satisfaction of the following criteria:

- *The proposed use is for a financial or professional service (A2), food or drink (A3), non residential institutions (D1) or leisure and entertainment (D2);*

- *The amenities of local residents are not adversely affected.*

2.8 With regards to Local Shopping Areas proposals for the change of use of existing retail premises to non-retail uses will only be permitted where in the absence of a proposed alternative land use they would not be likely to continue to operate and the loss would not result in a substantial decline in the range and quality of services for local people and visitors and the premises shall remain in a commercial use (Policy ES4). There are 18 local shopping areas identified under the Local Plan (for a full list see p. 92 Christchurch Local Plan 2001).

2.9 Policy ES5 identifies Land West of the High Street as a site for development/redevelopment for mainly shopping (A1) purposes but to include residential, financial or professional service use (A2), food and drink use (A3), non-residential institutions (D1) and leisure and entertainment uses (D2).

2.10 This site, identified under Policy ES5, became the subject of the Druitt Gardens Planning, Design and Development Framework in 2005. The site covers an area incorporating the Post Office site, the Cornfactor site and the 'Lanes'. The framework seeks to create a new woodland garden and centre piece for the town's cultural centre at Druitt Gardens while the Lanes, Cornfactor, library and heritage centre are to be the focus for creating a new mixed-use town centre development with an emphasis on retail, residential, heritage, cultural and community uses.

2.11 The Local Plan also identifies a need to recognise and consolidate the role of Bargates as primarily a local centre serving the nearby residential areas. Two sites have been earmarked to help achieve this goal. The first site is designated under Policy ES8 and known locally as 'land adjacent to the Royalty Inn'. This site presents an opportunity for limited retail development of between 10,000 – 12,000 sq. ft (930 sq. m – 1115 sq. m) with the possibility of providing a pedestrian link to the adjacent Magistrate's Court car park. The second site is the Magistrate's Court which has been the subject of a development brief detailed below.

2.12 The Council adopted the Magistrates Court Development Brief in April 2003. This site has been identified as integral to the borough council's vision and strategy for the long-term future of Christchurch. The site is considered to offer a unique opportunity for Christchurch through the development of a comprehensive and high quality mixed use scheme. The site is in a strategic location and most importantly it is envisaged that any proposal will contribute towards enhanced links between the High Street and Bargates. The principal aspirations for the site are to:

- promote development that will generate better pedestrian linkages and flows between the High Street and Bargates;

- encourage design that relates to the historical character of the area and so inspires sustainable development of the highest architectural and urban design quality that compliments local distinctiveness;

- identify a mix of complementary uses that are compatible and complementary to the town centre's existing retail, leisure and service offer, and which will not undermine the vitality and viability of the town centre as a whole.

2.13 A Retail Capacity Assessment for Christchurch was completed in December 2001 by Graham House which covers the period 2001 – 2011. This study concluded that the catchment area of Christchurch town centre was weak for convenience retailing with the majority of trade leaking to the Sainsbury’s store in Lyndhurst Road and Tesco at Bournemouth. The study indicated that the Somerfield in Highcliffe was significantly undertrading. The study concludes that there is no quantitative capacity for additional convenience floorspace within Christchurch up to 2011. However, it was considered that capacity existed to accommodate a further 2,400 sq. m of comparison floorspace.

2.14 The Town Centre Strategy (Adopted November 2004) aims to clarify a vision for the development of Christchurch Town Centre over the next 20 years. The Council have stated that the key aims for Christchurch over this 20 year period are:

- to clarify a vision for the development of the town centre over the next 20 years;

- to provide a framework to accommodate change whilst protecting the range of high quality heritage assets;

- to examine and make proposals for improvements to the existing transportation network;

- to enhance present levels of vitality and viability;

- to provide a response to PPG6;

- to inform preparation of a Community Plan, together with reviews of the Structure Plan and Local Plan (taking into consideration the introduction of the new planning system);

- to assist bids for public sector external funding and to attract private sector investments.

## 3.0 EXISTING SHOPPING FACILITIES

### Convenience Shopping Provision

3.1 Table 3.1 sets out the main food stores within Christchurch and other convenience sales floorspace within small convenience shops. The largest food stores (over 1,000 sq m net) are concentrated in Christchurch town centre. This table excludes the Waitrose store, which was not opened when the fieldwork for this study was undertaken.

**Table 3.1: Existing Convenience Good Shopping Provision in Christchurch**

| Town/Store | Net Sales Floorspace Sq M |
|---|---|
| Sainsbury, Christchurch | 3,559 |
| Somerfield, Christchurch | 957 |
| Marks & Spencer, Christchurch | 1,210 |
| Other town centre convenience, Christchurch | 735 |
| Tesco Express, Highcliffe | 300 |
| Somerfield, Lymington Road, Highcliffe | 411 |
| Other convenience in Highcliffe | 210 |
| Tesco Express, Barrack Road, Christchurch | 163 |
| Other Barrack Road | 150 |
| Purewell local shops | 270 |
| **Total** | **7,965** |

Sources: Institute of Grocery Distribution, Goad and NLP Site Survey

### Comparison Shopping Provision

3.2 Table 3.2 sets out the distribution of comparison floorspace within Christchurch. Christchurch is the largest centre in size in terms of comparison floorspace. Out of centre retail parks, including Somerford, Stony Lane and Bailey Drive Retail Park contain a significant proportion of the comparison retail floorspace within Christchurch.

**Table 3.2: Existing Comparison Good Shopping Provision in Christchurch**

| Location | Floorspace Gross Sq M | Floorspace Net Sq M |
|---|---|---|
| Christchurch comparison shops | 11,670 | 7,586 |
| Christchurch Retail Warehouses | 27,736 | 22,189 |
| Highcliffe comparison shops | n/a | 1,734 |
| Local shops, Christchurch | n/a | 1,912 |
| Comparison in food stores, Christchurch | n/a | 1,051 |
| **Total** | **n/a** | **21,907** |

Sources: Goad and NLP Site Survey

## 4.0 CHRISTCHURCH TOWN CENTRE

### Introduction

4.1 Christchurch is a relatively large town centre located in a set back position from the coast to the edge of the New Forest. The town has good transport links via the A35 to Southampton, Poole and Bournemouth with the latter being closest. Christchurch is the main town centre for the Borough and as such performs a number of important functions such as providing a range of shopping, leisure, entertainment, recreation and employment opportunities.

4.2 The key issues emerging from NLP's health check of the town are outlined below.

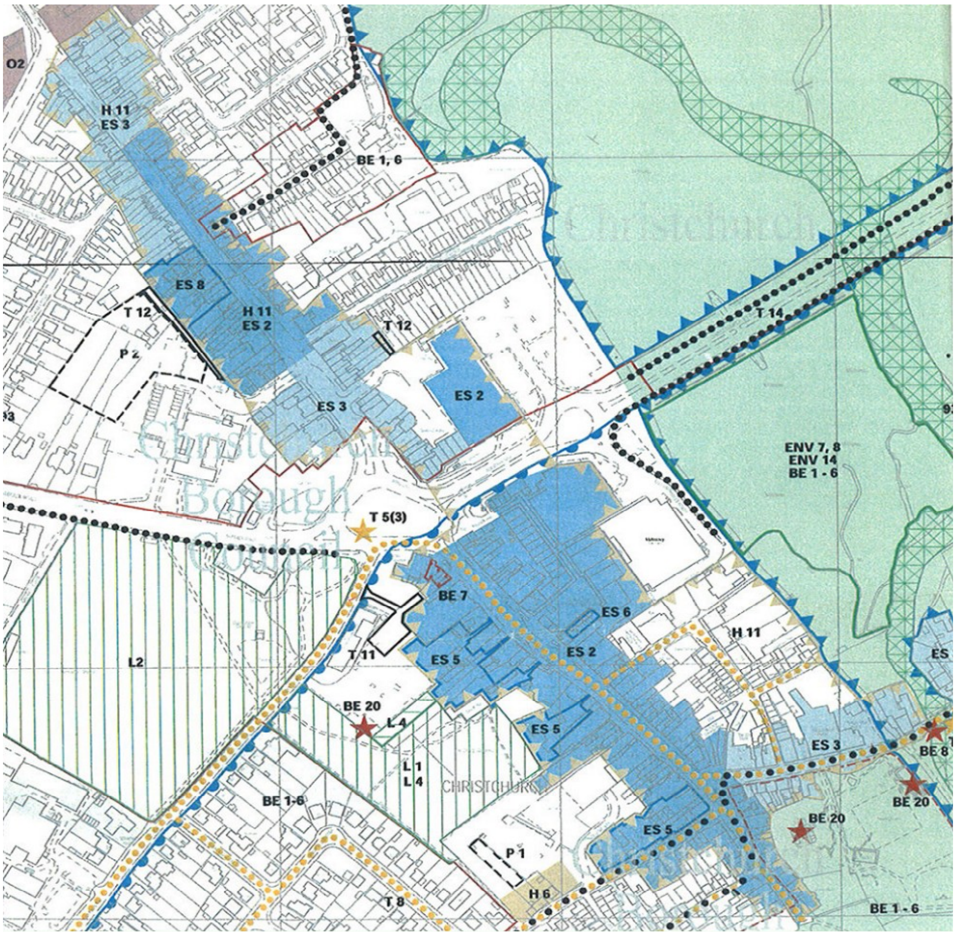
### Structure

4.3 The shopping area of Christchurch is concentrated along Bargates and the High Street, with some shops located within the Saxon Centre (along Bargates/Fountain Way) and the Saxon Square Shopping Centre (located off High Street/Fountain Way). The main centre is linear in structure with some shops located on side streets (Wick Lane and Castle Street).

4.4 The Local Plan (2001) proposal maps indicate both primary and secondary shopping cores. The primary core includes the length of the High Street and parts of Church Street, the Coop/Waitrose store and part of Bargates. The secondary core includes the upper part of Bargates, the Saxon Centre and Castle Street.

4.5 The prime retail pitch, with the highest concentration of national multiples, is located within the Saxon Square Shopping Centre and the upper part of the High Street.

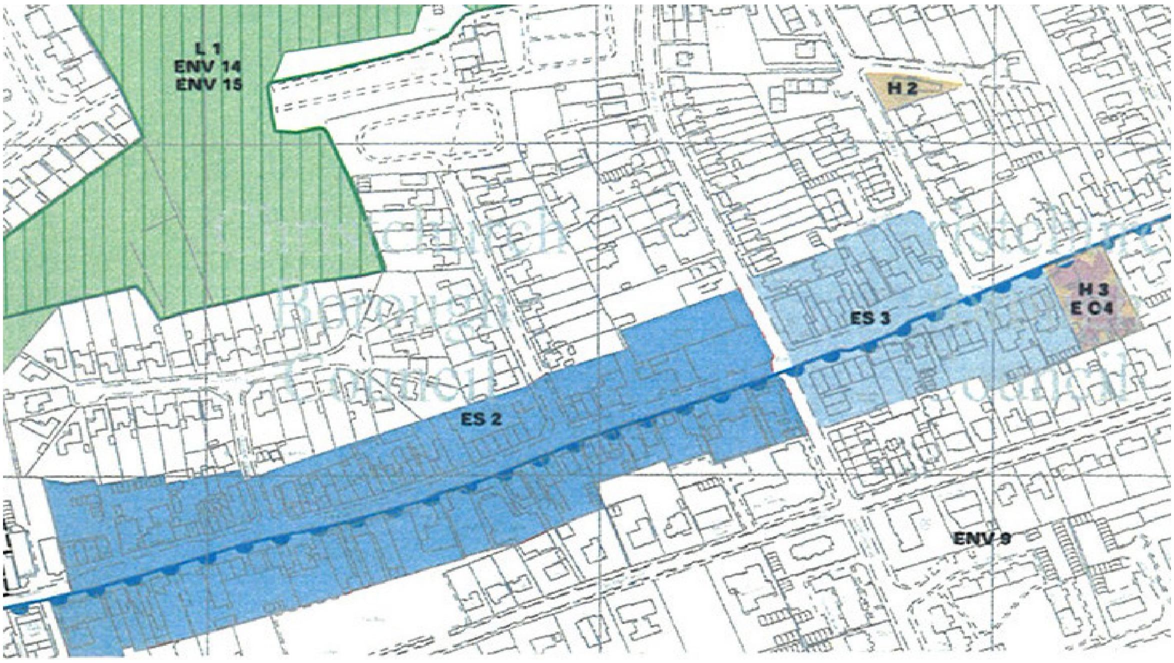
*Christchurch Town Centre Existing Shopping Frontage*




*Key:*


*(Source: Christchurch Proposals Map [March 2001]).*

*Highcliffe Town Centre Existing Shopping Frontage*




*Key:*


*Source: Christchurch Proposals Map [March 2001].*

*Mix of Uses*

4.6 As illustrated in the table below Christchurch has 209 ground floor non-residential units in total. The town has a relatively low proportion of comparison retail units (38.3%) compared with the GB average (48.3%). Conversely the proportion of service and miscellaneous uses substantially exceeds this average by 13.8%.

4.7 Both the figures for convenience goods and vacancy rates are largely in line with the national average.

*Mix of Uses*

**Table 4.1: Christchurch Use Mix**

| **Type of Unit** | **Number of Units** | **Proportion of Total Number of Units (%)** | |
|---|---|---|---|
| | | **Christchurch (%)** | **GB Average (%)** |
| Comparison Retail | 80 | 38.3 | 48.3 |
| Convenience Retail | 15 | 7.2 | 9.4 |
| Services/Misc | 95 | 45.4 | 31.6 |
| Vacant/Under Construction | 19 | 9.1 | 10.7 |
| **Total** | **209** | **100** | **100** |

4.8 The Centre has a high proportion of service and miscellaneous uses for its size in particular banks and other financial services, estate agents and hairdressers/beauty salons. There were also quite a high proportion of restaurants to the south of the town on Church Street and takeaways to the north along Bargates. Due to the more secondary nature of these areas of the town this is not cause for concern.

*Breakdown of Comparison Shops*

**Table 4.2: Christchurch Comparison Shops**

| **Type of Unit** | **Christchurch** | | **GB** |
|---|---|---|---|
| | **Number of Units** | **%** | **Average (%)** |
| Clothing and footwear | 21 | 26.2 | 26 |
| Furniture, carpets and textiles | 7 | 8.7 | 10 |
| Booksellers, arts, craft and stationers | 3 | 3.8 | 9 |
| Electrical, games, music, photography | 7 | 8.7 | 11 |
| DIY, hardware and homewares | 3 | 3.8 | 6 |
| China, glass, gifts and fancy goods | 11 | 13.8 | 4 |
| Cars, motorcycles and motor accessories | 1 | 1.2 | 3 |
| Chemist, drugstore, opticians | 6 | 7.5 | 8 |
| Variety, Department and catalogue | 3 | 3.8 | 2 |
| Florists, nurserymen and seedsmen | 2 | 2.5 | 2 |
| Toys, hobby, cycle, sport | 5 | 6.3 | 6 |
| Jewellers | 4 | 5 | 5 |
| Other Comparison retailers | 7 | 8.7 | 8 |
| **TOTAL** | 80 | 100 | 100 |

4.9 The above table highlights that Christchurch is largely in line with the GB average in terms of the proportion of shops selling various types of comparison goods. However, there was a lack of shops selling books, arts, crafts and stationary and over provision of shops selling china, glass, gifts and fancy goods.

4.10 The topography of the town centre is relatively flat. The majority of shopping units are traditional in style although there are modern units at both the Saxon Centre and Saxon Square and it is here that the majority of the multiple retailers are located. Units within the town centre vary considerably in size although there are a high number of larger units.

4.11 Christchurch is a relatively busy centre in terms of both pedestrian and vehicular flows and there are markets held in Saxon Square every Monday and Thursday and a Farmer's Market held the first Friday of each month.

4.12 The centre is not pedestrianised apart from Saxon Square Shopping Centre which can lead to vehicular/pedestrian conflicts. A busy road also provides a physical barrier between the main High Street and the Saxon Centre/Bargates area of the town although a Subway provides a good pedestrian link between these two parts.

4.13 The centre has good road access from the A35 and benefits from a rail link located on Stour Road, within easy walking distance of Bargates and the High Street.

### Town Centre Audit

4.14 As part of the study each of the towns were audited based on 35 factors and awarded a score from 1 (being very poor) to 5 (being very good).

*Christchurch Town Centre:*

*Trade Mix*

4.15 As part of the study the primary shopping area was rated in terms of the proportion and quality of national multiple operators, specialist independent traders and uses associated with the evening economy (public houses, bars, restaurants and entertainment uses). The following table represents Christchurch's score:

**Table 4.3**

| Performance | Shopping Area Score |
|---|---|
| Proportion of special independent traders | 4 |
| Quality of special independent traders | 4 |
| Proportion of national multiple outlets | 3 |
| Quality of national multiple outlets | 3 |
| Presence of evening economy | 4 |

4.16 The quality and proportion of special independent traders within the primary area is quite good although there remains room for improvement. However, the quality and proportion of multiple retailers was rated as average with the majority of units housing only low order national retailers such as Shoe Express and New Look.

4.17 The majority of national multiples are located within the Saxon Square shopping centre and the middle section of the High Street. To the Bargates end of the centre there are few comparison retailers with a high concentration of evening economy uses such as takeaways. However, the presence of a more desirable evening economy is apparent within the Church Street area at the opposite end of the centre within which there are several restaurant units offering more refined dining experiences.

### *Anti-Social Behaviour & Security*

4.18 The primary shopping area was also rated in relation to CCTV coverage, police presence, anti-social behaviour and street lighting during the NLP visit.

**Table 4.4**

| Performance | Shopping Area Score |
|---|---|
| Evidence of begging/on –street drinking | 5 |
| CCTV coverage/police presence | 3 |
| Frequency of street lighting | 2 |

4.19 During NLP's visit to the centre there was no evidence of either on-street drinking or begging. The CCTV coverage and police presence was rated as average and the frequency of street lights rated quite poorly at 2. However, overall it was considered that Christchurch offered a relatively strong feeling of safety although there is some scope to improve this.

### *Accessibility & Movement*

4.20 Factors influencing accessibility and movement around the centre were considered, i.e. pedestrian/vehicular conflict, frequency of pedestrian crossings, bus stops and the location and convenience of car parks.

**Table 4.5**

| Factor | Shopping Area Score |
|---|---|
| Location and convenience of car parks | 5 |
| Pedestrian/vehicular conflict | 2 |
| Traffic congestion | 3 |
| Frequency of pedestrian crossings | 2 |
| Frequency of bus stops | 4 |
| Quality of bus stops/shelters | 3 |

4.21 Movement in and around the town centre of Christchurch is an issue due to the largely linear non-pedestrianised structure of the centre along with a high volume of traffic and a low frequency of pedestrian crossings which all cause a certain amount of conflict. However, the subway linking Bargates to the High Street does ease some of this conflict and is important in linking these two areas.

4.22 In terms of car parking the location and convenience of the existing car parks is excellent with the majority being located just off the High Street or within easy reach and at a reasonable cost. It is considered that the quality of bus stops/shelters could be improved within the town centre.

*Cleaning & Maintenance*

4.23 NLP's analysis of cleanliness and maintenance of the town centre shopping areas were rated based on six separate factors. The cleanliness and maintenance of Christchurch was very good overall with limited evidence of littering, gum, fly-posting or graffiti with the lowest of these earning a rating of 4. However, the quality of the shop frontages and fascias and the maintenance of the paving and street materials were given a rating of 3 and therefore there is considered to be some room for improvement in these respects.

**Table 4.6**

| Factor | Shopping Area Score |
|---|---|
| Litter and street cleaning | 4 |
| Gum on paving | 4 |
| Evidence of fly-posting | 4 |
| Evidence of graffiti | 5 |
| Maintenance of paving/street materials | 3 |
| Quality of shop frontages/fascia | 3 |

*Quality of Streetscape & Environment*

4.24 The quality of the streetscape and general shopping environment were assessed within the town centre shopping area of Christchurch based on 12 separate factors. The quality of the streetscape was rated as being of a reasonably low standard within the primary shopping area, with the majority of factors rated as 'neither good nor bad' and public art rated as 'quite poor'. However, the quality and attractiveness of the commercial properties and planting scored better with a rating of 4.

**Table 4.7**

| Factor | Shopping Area Score |
|---|---|
| Quality of paving/street materials | 3 |
| Quality of street furniture (bins and chairs) | 3 |
| Quantity of street furniture (bins and chairs) | 3 |
| Quality of Public Art | 2 |
| Quality of street signage/maps | 3 |
| Quantity of street signage/maps | 3 |
| Quality of design of street lighting | 3 |
| Quality/attractiveness of commercial properties (inc. upper floors) | 4 |
| Quality of planting/trees | 4 |
| Quantity of planting/trees | 4 |
| Quantity/Quality of town centre parks/public open space | 3 |
| Street entertainment/events/ liveliness | 4 |

4.25 The general liveliness of the centre was also deemed ‘quite good’ although this was largely due to the fact that there was a craft market in the Saxon Square Shopping Centre area which occurs every Thursday.

*Property Vacancies*

4.26 The number and concentration of shop vacancies were considered. When compared to the national average the vacancy levels within Christchurch can be considered reasonable. However, there is a large concentration of vacant units at the Saxon Square Shopping Centre making it is easy to perceive that the proportion of vacant units is much more. In addition, some units had the appearance that they had been vacant for some time but none were considered to be in a bad state of repair.

**Table 4.8**

| Factor | Primary Shopping Area Score |
|---|---|
| Number of vacant units | 2 |
| Concentrations of vacant units | 2 |
| Derelict/long term vacant units | 3 |

*Summary*

4.27 Overall the primary shopping area within Christchurch town centre is considered reasonable with the average score for the 35 factors totalling 3.3 (i.e. between ‘neither good nor bad’ and ’quite good’). No factors were given a rating of 1 (very poor) although 6 factors were rated as ‘quite poor’ with a score of 2. Only three factors were awarded the top score of 5 which generally related to cleanliness.

4.28 The poorest factors were perceived conflict between vehicles and pedestrians and the number and concentrations of vacant units within Saxon Square which are both areas with scope for improvement.

## Business Occupier Survey

4.29 The business occupier surveys are discussed in detail in Volume 1. However, the key findings for Christchurch town centre (for which there was a 42% response rate) were as follows:

- The majority of businesses have been trading in the town for over 10 years (61%). Only 6% of businesses had been trading for under one year;

- The majority of businesses are leased (70%) with only 24% of units owner-occupied;

- In terms of plans to change the business, 78% of respondents stated that they had no plans. However, 9% proposed to refit/extend/improve and 8% stated their intentions to relocate out of the town centre;

- The current trading performance of Christchurch's businesses varied with 11% stating it was very good, 33% good, 36% satisfactory and 20% poor;

- When asked whether trading performance had improved over the past 2 years there was disagreement with 34% saying it had declined, 33% stating it had improved and 25% saying there had been no change;

- The expected 12 month future trading performance was generally positive with 45% expecting improvement and 28% expecting it to stay the same although 19% of respondents were anticipating some depth of decline;

- The main factors which Christchurch businesses believe constrain their performance is high overheads (45%) and the economy in general (44%). The price and availability of car parking was also a concern with 31% of respondents citing these respectively;

- The average score awarded to Christchurch town centre by the business respondents was 2.85 which is between neutral and poor with the lowest scoring factors being traffic congestion, parking charges, rates and rents;

- 56% of businesses within Christchurch are of the opinion that it is too down market although 27% of respondents believe that the town's current market position is fine as it is. A further 3% of respondents consider there to be too many charity shops;

- 45% of businesses feel there are not enough small independent shops within Christchurch although 34% disagree with this and believe the mix is right and a further 16% believe there are too many small independents and not enough large chain stores;

- The three factors seen as the most important future planning issues by businesses were: increase in the range of local/speciality retailers (47%), remove/reduce traffic congestion (50%) and improve car parking and reduce charges (63%).

### Christchurch SWOT Analysis

4.30 The strategic recommendations for Christchurch and a review of development opportunities in the centre is summarised in Section 8. The SWOT Analysis of Christchurch below is based on NLP's audit of the centre, the household shopper survey results and discussions with Council officers and stakeholders.

**Table 4.9: Christchurch SWOT Analysis**

| Strengths | Weaknesses |
|---|---|
| • Personal Safety/Business security<br>• Places to eat and drink<br>• Mix of multiples and independent shops<br>• Good food store provision<br>• Attractive shopping environment | • Small catchment area<br>• Perceived to be too down market<br>• Pedestrian/vehicular conflicts<br>• Linear structure and fragmented centre<br>• Concentration of vacant units |
| **Opportunities** | **Threats** |
| • Improved linkages Bargate and the High street<br>• Development opportunity sites<br>• Niche markets (food festival)<br>• Interest from national retailers | • Increased traffic through town<br>• Proximity to Bournemouth and Castlepoint |

## 5.0 HIGHCLIFFE DISTRICT CENTRE

### Introduction

5.1 Highcliffe-on-Sea is a coastal town located to the east of Christchurch. It is one of a number of towns that merge to form a conurbation along the south coast of Dorset. The centre of the town is characterised predominantly by post-war and modern building although there is the odd older building, with the late 1800's Globe Inn pub and a couple of Art Deco style buildings. The area is defined by many of the characteristics of the typical British coastal holiday town, with many uses in the area centred on tourism and a high proportion of retired residents.

5.2 Highcliffe is surrounded by a number of areas afforded environmental protection. To the north and east there are a Sites of Nature Conservation Interest and to the south the coastal area is designated a Site of Special Scientific Interest.

5.3 Highcliffe is well positioned for development as it is on the A337, which is the main coastal road giving access to Christchurch and Bournemouth as well as the potential to attract passing trade driving along the coast. The town is also served by Hinton Admiral Railway Station which is located approximately one mile north of the centre and has an hourly service.

### Structure

1.3 The main shopping area of Highcliffe is concentrated along the linear form of Lymington Road (A337), with retail frontages along side streets off Lymington Road stretching only a short way from the main road. This means the town centres shopping area is long but narrow. The Christchurch Local Plan identifies the Primary Shopping Frontage along the A337 from the Globe Inn public house to the west to Waterford Road to the east. There is a small area of secondary frontage to the east of the junction with Waterford Road.

### Mix of Uses and Occupier Representation

5.4 The main shopping area in Highcliffe provides:

- Convenience Shopping – including a Somerfield, a Tesco Express, butchers, greengrocers and an off licence.

- Comparison Shopping – predominantly small independent shops covering a variety of goods.
- Entertainment and leisure – including public houses, restaurants and takeaways.
- Services – including a number of high street banks, financial services, estate agents and hairdressers.

5.5 Highcliffe has 120 ground floor non-residential units as shown in the table below. The Town Centre has below the national average of comparison (40%) and convenience (7.5%) units whilst services and miscellaneous uses are much higher than the national average at 47.5%.

5.6 The number of vacant units (5%) is below the national average. The vacant units are not clustered in anyway, but are dispersed along the length of the centre.

*Mix of Uses*

**Table 5.1: Highcliffe Use Mix**

| Type of Unit | Number of Units | Proportion of Total Number of Units (%) | |
|---|---|---|---|
| | | Highcliffe | GB Average |
| Comparison Retail | 48 | 40.0 | 48.3 |
| Convenience Retail | 9 | 7.5 | 9.4 |
| Services/Misc | 57 | 47.5 | 31.6 |
| Vacant/Under Construction | 6 | 5.0 | 10.7 |
| Total | 120 | 100.0 | 100.0 |

5.7 Highcliffe does not have a high proportion of convenience outlets. However, those that do exist include a Tesco Express store and a Somerfield supermarket as well as a newsagent, a greengrocer and several butchers providing some choice.

5.8 There are only 48 comparison retail units within the centre, but most of the main goods categories are represented, and the range of comparison shops is relatively good for a small centre. There is a higher proportion of: china, glass, gifts and fancy goods; chemist, drugstore and opticians; and 'other' comparison retailers than the national average. There are less electrical, games, music, photography shops and clothing and footwear shops (compared with the national average). However, this trend is likely to be largely because the town is aiming itself at the tourist market.

*Breakdown of Comparison Shops*

**Table 5.2: Highcliffe Comparison Shops**

| Type of Unit | Number of Units | Proportion of Total Units (%) | |
|---|---|---|---|
| | | Highcliffe | GB Average |
| Clothing and footwear | 3 | 6.25 | 26 |
| Furniture, carpets and textiles | 5 | 10.4 | 10 |
| Booksellers, arts, craft and stationers | 4 | 8.3 | 9 |
| Electrical, games, music, photography | 2 | 4.2 | 11 |
| DIY, hardware and homewares | 3 | 6.25 | 6 |
| China, glass, gifts and fancy goods | 5 | 10.4 | 4 |
| Cars, motorcycles and motor accessories | 1 | 2.1 | 3 |
| Chemist, drugstore and opticians | 6 | 12.5 | 8 |
| Variety, department and catalogue | 1 | 2.1 | 2 |
| Florists, nurserymen and seedsmen | 3 | 6.25 | 2 |
| Toys, hobby, cycle and sport | 2 | 4.2 | 6 |
| Jewellers | 3 | 6.25 | 5 |
| Other comparison retailers (including charity shops) | 10 | 20.8 | 8 |
| TOTAL | 48 | 100 | 100 |

5.9 Service and miscellaneous uses are very high compared to the national average, in particular services uses including, banks and financial and other services (25.5%) and estate agents (17%) are prevalent in the town centre.

*Breakdown of Service Uses*

**Table 5.3: Breakdown of Services**

| Type of use | Number of Units | Proportion of Total Units (%) | |
|---|---|---|---|
| | | Highcliffe | GB Average |
| Restaurants, café, takeaways & pubs | 16 | 34.0 | 41 |
| Banks and financial and other services | 12 | 25.5 | 19 |
| Estate Agents and valuers | 8 | 17.0 | 11 |
| Travel Agents | 2 | 4.3 | 6 |
| Hairdressers and beauty parlours | 7 | 14.9 | 19 |
| Laundries and dry cleaners | 2 | 4.3 | 4 |
| TOTAL | 47 | 100 | 100 |

5.10 The shopping units within the centre are occupied by a mixture of local independent traders of differing quality. There is minimal representation from the major national multiples with Lloyds Pharmacy the only recognisable comparison retail presence. The majority of shopping units are relatively small. The centre was moderately busy in terms of both pedestrian and vehicular flows when visited. The main shopping area is not pedestrianised and the A337 is congested with traffic creating a physical barrier to pedestrians and separating the shops on either side of the road. There are three pelican crossings available, although they are spread along the length of the core shopping area.

5.11 Highcliffe is easily accessible via ‘A’ roads. There is also Hinton Admiral Railway Station to the north, though this is not quite within an easy walking distance (approximately 1 mile). There are accessible car parks to the south of the A337 behind Somerfield and behind some of the shops on the north side, as well as a car park slightly further away on the seafront.

5.12 Highcliffe is a relatively lively town centre with a good provision of services and it appears that local residents have a good choice of independent retailers and services. The number of vacant units is well below the national average and there does not appear to be any clustering of vacant units suggesting the town centre is relatively prosperous in its role as a centre serving local needs whilst also picking up passing and tourist trade.

## District Centre Audit

5.13 The distinction between primary and secondary shopping areas in Highcliffe, as designated within the Local Plan, in practice is not reflective of the way the centre functions. The small secondary area located to the east of the crossroads with Waterford Road is essentially a continuation of the linear primary area with the only noticeable physical separation being the crossroads and no noticeable change in the quality of the urban realm. With regard to this the centre was rated as a whole with no distinction made between primary and secondary areas. To analyse the centre a scoring system of 1 to 5 has been used where 1 = ‘very poor’, 2 = ‘quite poor’, 3 = ‘neither good nor poor’, 4 = ‘quite good’ and 5 = ‘very good’.

### *Trade Mix*

5.14 The centre was rated in terms of the proportion and quality of national multiple operators, specialist independent traders and uses associated with the evening economy (public houses, bars, restaurants and entertainment uses).

**Table 5.4**

| **Performance Factor** | **Area Score (1 to 5)** |
|---|---|
| Proportion of national multiples | 1 |
| Quality of national multiples | 1 |
| Proportion of specialist independent traders | 5 |
| Quality of specialist independent traders | 4 |
| Presence of evening economy | 2 |

5.15 Within Highcliffe the quality and proportion of national multiples is considered to be 'very poor' due to their low representation, with only Tesco and Somerfield major brand names. This is in contrast to the proportion and quality of specialist independent traders which rate well. General evening economy uses are 'quite poor' within the centre with only a few restaurants and 1 public house. There was no other evidence of entertainment or evening based uses within the centre.

*Anti-Social Behaviour and Security*

5.16 The centre was rated in relation to CCTV coverage, police presence, anti-social behaviour and street lighting. Other issues relevant to anti-social behaviour were also considered but have been analysed in the section on maintenance and cleaning i.e. graffiti, fly-posting and chewing gum.

**Table 5.5**

| Performance Factor | Area Score (1 to 5) |
|---|---|
| Evidence of begging/on-street drinking | 5 |
| CCTV coverage/Police presence | 3 |
| Frequency of street lighting | 3 |

5.17 During NLP's visit there was no evidence of begging or on-street drinking. There was no obvious CCTV coverage. However, the police presence seemed good with Highcliffe police station located visibly on the main road within the centre. In addition many of the shop windows were displaying identical signs, assumed to be part of a local initiative, stating that no money was kept overnight in their premises and that the police actively patrolled this area. We therefore considered the level of CCTV coverage and police presence to be 'adequate' on balance. Whilst no policeperson was seen during the visit, there did seem to be good natural surveillance and a general feeling of safety.

*Accessibility & Movement*

5.18 Factors influencing accessibility and movement around the centre were considered.

**Table 5.6**

| Performance Factor | Area Score (1 to 5) |
|---|---|
| Location and convenience of car parks | 4 |
| Pedestrian – vehicular conflict | 1 |
| Traffic congestion | 2 |
| Frequency of pedestrian crossings | 3 |
| Frequency of bus stops | 3 |
| Quality of bus stops/shelter | 2 |

5.19 The pedestrian-vehicular conflict in Highcliffe town centre raises concerns. The shopping area is very linear along the A337, which is a very busy main road. This combination of linear form and 'quite poor' levels of traffic congestion lead to the road acting as a barrier to pedestrian movements and the two sides of the road being segregated. This is partially mitigated by four pedestrian crossings, but the frequency of these is only adequate and being pelican crossings they pose a short wait to pedestrians before you can cross the road.

5.20 The main public car park is a large surface car park located behind Somerfield very close to the centre of the shopping core and providing easy access on foot to the whole centre. There is also customer car parking areas to the rear of numerous shops, though in general these are small and reserved for customers and employees. There is also some provision for on-street parking along Lymington Road (A337) and in the residential areas surrounding the centre. The frequency of bus stops is adequate with bus lay-bys at one end of the centre and a signed stop on either side of the road at the other. The bus shelters at the east end of the centre are of a 'quite good' quality with no signs of vandalism, however, the other stops within the centre are just signed stops so overall the quality is 'neither good nor poor'.

*Cleaning and Maintenance*

5.21 NLP's own analysis of cleanliness and maintenance of the primary and secondary areas were rated based on six separate factors.

### Table 5.7

| Performance Factor | Area Score (1 to 5) |
|---|---|
| Litter and street cleaning | 4 |
| Chewing gum on pavements | 3 |
| Fly-posting | 5 |
| Graffiti | 5 |
| Maintenance of paving/street materials | 4 |
| Quality of shop frontage/fascia | 3 |

5.22 Highcliffe rated well in terms of cleanliness. During NLP's visit there was no evidence of fly-posting or graffiti and in general there was a low level of litter and general detritus. However, there was a normal amount of chewing gum on the pavements and the quality of shop frontages were in places tired, lacking inspiration and contributed little to the streetscape, although some buildings have kept some good features.

*Quality of the Streetscape and Environment*

5.23 The quality of the streetscape and general shopping environment were assessed within Highcliffe based on 12 separate factors.

### Table 5.8

| Performance Factor | Area Score (1 to 5) |
|---|---|
| Quality of paving/street materials | 4 |
| Quality of street furniture | 2 |
| Quantity of street furniture | 2 |
| Quality of public art | 1 |
| Quality of street signage/maps | 4 |
| Quantity of street signage/maps | 4 |
| Quality of design of street lighting | 3 |
| Attractiveness of commercial properties (inc. upper floors) | 2 |
| Quality of planting/trees | 2 |
| Quantity of planting/trees | 2 |
| Town centre parks and public open spaces | 2 |
| Street entertainment, events and liveliness | 3 |

5.24 The quality of the streetscape was rated as being of a reasonably low standard with the quality and quantity of both street furniture and planting/trees being 'quite poor' despite obvious efforts outside of the new Tesco Express. In addition there is no public art and commercial properties are generally of little merit, with only small features, such as the art deco clock above the G&T Discount Store, providing visual interest. Improvements to these lacking features could considerably improve the streetscene. There are also no parks or open spaces within the town centre although the short walk to the seafront and a large public park to the west mean that open space is easily accessible. In general the centre was lively with lots of people about although no specific events or entertainment was on offer.

*Property Vacancies*

5.25 The number and concentration of shop vacancies were considered. Vacancy levels are low within the centre and of the units that were vacant most seemed in reasonable condition or were undergoing work.

**Table 5.9**

| Performance Factor | Area Score (1 to 5) |
|---|---|
| Number of vacant units | 4 |
| Concentration of vacant units | 4 |
| Derelict/long term vacant units | 3 |

*Summary*

5.26 The average score for the 35 factors in the centre was 3.00 (i.e. 'neither good nor poor'). Four of the 35 factors (proportion and quality of national multiples, quality of public art and pedestrian-vehicular conflict) were considered 'very poor' (one point) centre, although four of the 35 factors (proportion of independent specialist traders, evidence of on-street begging/drinking, evidence of fly-posting and evidence of graffiti) were considered 'very good' (five points).

5.27 Overall Highcliffe town centre is functional and is clean and tidy. However it appears to be a bit tired when it comes to good quality streetscapes including the architecture of the buildings, street furniture, planting and public art. The centre seems well used and there are few vacant units although vehicle congestion and poor access for pedestrians cause conflict.

## Business Occupier Surveys

5.28 The business occupier surveys are discussed in detail in Volume 1. However, the key findings for Highcliffe district centre (for which there was a 36% response rate) were as follows:

- The majority of businesses have been trading in the town for over 10 years (55%) or between 6 - 10 years (28%). No businesses had been trading for under one year;

- The majority of businesses are leased (83%) with only 11% of units owner-occupied;

- In terms of plans to change the business, 72% of respondents stated that they had no plans. However, 16% are proposing to refit/extend/improve their units and a further 6% stated their intentions to close or relocate out of the centre;

- The current trading performance of Highcliffe's businesses varied with 6% stating it was very good, 39% good, 44% satisfactory and 11% poor;

- When asked whether trading performance had improved over the past 2 years there was disagreement with 28% saying it had declined and 22% stating it had improved. The majority (44%) stated that it had stayed the same;

- The expected 12 month future trading performance was generally positive with 28% expecting improvement and 44% expecting it to stay the same although 22% of respondents are expecting a certain amount of decline in trade;

- The main factors which Highcliffe businesses believe constrain their performance is high overheads (28%) and the economy in general (39%). The price of car parking was also a concern with 28% of businesses stating this.

- The average score awarded to Highcliffe district centre by businesses was 2.61 which is between neutral and poor with the lowest scoring factors being the market, entertainment and leisure facilities and traffic congestion (all scoring <2);

- 39% of businesses within Highcliffe have the opinion that it is too down market and 11% believe that there is not enough variety of shops/retailers. However, 28% believe it is fine as it is;

- 55% of businesses believe there are not enough small independent shops although conversely 17% consider there to be too many small independents and not enough large chain stores. 28% consider the mix to be about right;

- The three factors seen as the most important future planning issues by businesses were: increase in the range of local/speciality retailers (67%), remove/reduce traffic congestion (61%) and improve car parking and reduce charges (39%).

### Highcliffe SWOT Analysis

5.29 The strategic recommendations for Highcliffe and a review of development opportunities in the centre is summarised in Section 8. The SWOT Analysis of Highcliffe below is based on NLP's audit of the centre, the household shopper survey results and discussions with Council officers and stakeholders.

**Table 5.10: Highcliffe SWOT Analysis**

| **Strengths** | **Weaknesses** |
|---|---|
| • Personal Safety/Business security<br>• Specialist independent shops | • Too many charity shops<br>• Limited range/choice of shops/services<br>• Very small catchment area<br>• Traffic congestion<br>• Poor street furniture/planting |
| **Opportunities** | **Threats** |
| • Former Market development opportunity site<br>• Environmental improvements | • Increased traffic through town<br>• Proximity to Christchurch and New Milton |

## 6.0 OTHER LOCAL CENTRES

### *Barrack Road*

6.1 Barrack Road is a linear centre located along the A35 main road to the North-West of Christchurch Town Centre. The area is predominantly residential in nature. The retail elements of the centre are dispersed along Barrack Road with a Tesco Express at one end and other shops and services, including a One Stop convenience store with Post Office, spread further along Barrack Road towards Christchurch Town Centre.

6.2 The comparison retail offer is dominated by independent bulky goods retailers including furniture shops and motor vehicle spares shops. There are also a number of large car showrooms. The dispersed linear form with the busy main road segregating the two sides of the road with few crossings leads to the centre being quite disjointed.

6.3 The Bailey Drive Retail Park is located midway down Barrack Road opposite Portfield Road. The 10,200 sq. m (gross) retail park opened December 1996 with parking for up to 450 cars. Within the retail park are fourteen units occupied by operators such as Homebase, Pets at Home, Comet, Roseby's, MFI, Carpet Right and Halfords as well as a Travel Inn and a Pizza Hut unit.

### *Purewell*

6.4 Purewell local centre is a cluster of various retailers located on the roads around Purewell Roundabout. The immediate area is mainly residential though there is a small industrial trading park on Groveley Road with several small warehouses and trade counters. The main retail functions are clustered in frontages on three of the roads from the roundabout; Somerford Road, Purewell and Stanpit, each of which has a local convenience store. There is a small pay and display car park at the west end of Purewell as well as good parking for the industrial and storage units on Groveley Road.

## 7.0 SCOPE FOR ACCOMMODATING GROWTH

### Floorspace Projections

7.1 The floorspace projections set out in Volume 1, Section 9 assume that new shopping/leisure facilities within the four local authority areas can maintain most of their current market share of expenditure within the study area. There are a number of issues that may influence the scope for new floorspace and the appropriate location for this development, as follows:

- major retail developments in competing centres, such as Poole town centre;
- the re-occupation of vacant floorspace within centres;
- the reliability of long term expenditure projections, particularly after 2016;
- the effect of Internet/home shopping on the demand for retail property;
- the acceptability of higher than average trading levels;
- the level of operator demand for floorspace, bearing in mind the proximity of larger centres;
- the potential impact new development may have on existing centres.

7.2 The analysis identified 25 vacant shop units within Christchurch, a vacancy rate of 7.6%, compared with the national vacancy rate of 10.7%. There could be scope to reduce this vacancy rate. If the vacancy rate is reduced to about 5% then about 900 sq m gross could be reoccupied in Christchurch (100 sq m per unit).

7.3 The floorspace projections include short term floorspace figures up to 2011. However, PPS6 suggests local authorities should seek to identify sites to meet the need for new floorspace for at least 5 years from adoption of the Development Plan (i.e. 2013/2014). It is therefore recommended that the Council identifies sufficient sites within the LDF to accommodate identified capacity up to 2016.

7.4 The long term floorspace projections shown in Volume 1 (i.e. to 2021 and 2026) should be treated with caution and should only be used as a broad guide, particularly when translated into the development plan allocations or when used to guide development control decisions. Long term forecasts may be subject to change due to unforeseen circumstances. Projected surplus expenditure is primarily attributable to projected growth in spending per capita. If the growth in expenditure is lower than that forecast then the scope for additional space will reduce. Long term projections should be monitored and kept under-review.

7.5 The expenditure projections in Volume 1 of this study exclude non-retail business home shopping, because special forms of trading has been excluded from the expenditure per capita estimates. The study assumes that special forms of trading will increase in the future, including the growth of internet shopping. However, the impact of Internet growth on the demand for retail floorspace is unclear. Some retailers' home delivery and Internet services utilise existing stores rather than warehouses, for example Tesco Direct. Therefore, Internet sales will not always significantly reduce the demand for shop floorspace. In addition, some of the growth in Internet sales may divert trade away from mail order companies rather than retail operators. Overall the impact of home shopping on expenditure projections is uncertain.

7.6 The quantitative and qualitative assessment of the potential capacity for new retail floorspace within Volume 1 suggests that there is scope for new retail development within Christchurch in the period up to 2016. The floorspace figures in Volume 1 are quoted as net floorspace figures. In considering potential site allocations, it is necessary to convert the figures to gross external floorspace. This has been done below in Table 7.1 below which assumes a net to gross ratio of 75% and rounds figures where appropriate. It may also be reasonable to expect up to a further 15% floorspace to be devoted to other non-retail Class A uses (Classes A2 to A5) which is reflected in the Total column. The range in figures represents the two different population scenarios tested.

**Table 7.1: Gross Retail Floorspace Requirements up to 2016**

| | **Convenience** | **Comparison** | **Total Class A Floorspace** |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Christchurch** | 0 | 5,600 – 6,750 sq m | 6,400 – 7,750 sq m |

7.7 In total between 6,400 to 7,750 sq m gross of retail floorspace could be required by 2016, which represents a 10% to 13% increase in existing floorspace. The top end of the range could be supported if the higher house completion rates and urban extension areas are implemented as envisaged in the RSS Panel Report, including the urban extension. However, if the high house building rates and urban extension are not implemented then the lower floorspace projections may be more appropriate.

If the urban extension is implemented in Christchurch then it is likely the new residential area will require new local/neighbourhood centres, which will accommodate some of the floorspace projections shown above. The level of floorspace in the urban extension will need to be determined when the scale and phasing of development is known.

7.8 This section examines the opportunities for accommodating this projected growth and assesses potential opportunities to accommodate this floorspace.

### Potential Development Opportunities

7.9 The need and capacity for additional retail and other main town centre uses within the local authority areas, particularly in the short to medium term (over the next 5 to 10 years), will need to be considered within the context of available development opportunities. The ability of the town centres to accommodate some or all of this potential needs to be addressed.

7.10 Having identified the scope for new development, potential sites and opportunities to accommodate this space, within or adjacent to existing centres, have been considered. The options include edge-of-centre sites capable of accommodating larger format food and non-food retail developments (re. PPS6 para. 2.43). The identification of opportunities has involved the following strands of work:

- discussions with Council officers to review potential development sites, emerging proposals and their local knowledge of other sites that may emerge; and
- NLP's own surveys of the centres to identify possible areas suitable for redevelopment, expansion of the centre boundary, refurbishment or expansion i.e. centre or edge-of-centre sites.

7.11 This process has generated a short list of potential opportunities. Each option identified has been assessed in terms of its suitability for different forms of development, including retail, leisure and entertainment facilities. The analysis has considered a number of issues, including:

- the PPS6 sequential approach to site selection, including linkages with the primary retail area;
- the capacity of the site to accommodate new floorspace and the type of retail or other town centre use suitable on the site;
- the availability of sites for development within a 5 year period, or in the longer term;
- an initial view of commercial viability and development constraints;

- land ownership and land assembly difficulties;
- operator demand for space within the centre;
- accessibility (particularly by public transport);
- the regeneration benefits of development;
- other preferred uses for the site (such as housing); and
- service arrangements and potential traffic congestion problems.

7.12 Sites in each centre have been evaluated, in terms of their implications on the scope and need for additional retail and leisure facilities, and have been assessed against the following factors:

- existing land uses and availability, categorised as follows:
  - short term – up to 2011;
  - medium term – 2011 to 2016
  - long term - likely to be completed after 2016;
- commercial potential for retail/leisure development and the most likely form of development, categorised as follows:
  - prime site - likely to attract a developer and occupiers;
  - secondary site – which may generate limited demand or only demand for a specific kind of use.
- potential scope to accommodate additional retail/leisure floorspace (net increase), categorised as follows:
  - small scale - up to 1,000 sq m gross floorspace;
  - medium scale – 1,000 to 2,500 sq m gross floorspace;
  - large scale - over 2,500 sq m gross floorspace;
- potential development constraints; and
- possible alternative uses.

7.13 The overall development prospects of each opportunity, taking on board all of the factors listed above, has been categorised as follows:

- *Good* - development sites that have good prospects for providing additional retail/leisure floorspace, and should be considered for implementation in the short to medium term;

- *Reasonable* - development sites which are well located and may provide potential for additional floorspace, although obstacles to development will need to be overcome, but implementation may only be achieved in the long term; and

- *Poor* - development sites that may be unattractive or unsuitable for retail or leisure development where their delivery is very uncertain.

7.14 This overall rating is based on an initial evaluation for each site. The level of analysis undertaken at this stage is limited, i.e. detailed appraisals of development constraints, land ownership and potential development costs have not been undertaken. More detailed examinations of each site will need to be undertaken before sites can be brought forward for development or ruled out as viable options. The evaluations undertaken for each opportunity are not detailed planning appraisals and they do not imply that planning permission should be granted or refused for retail/leisure development on any site. However, the evaluation is expected to identify potentially suitable development opportunities that may be worthy of further consideration by the Council. This evaluation provides a framework within which the Council can consider the implementation of a development strategy for the District.

### Evaluation of Potential Development Sites in Christchurch

7.15 Each opportunity site identified has been evaluated based on the factors listed earlier in this section. An assessment of each site is provided in Appendix A, and is summarised in Table 7.2.

**Table 7.2: Christchurch Site Evaluation Summary**

| Site | Potential Scale Retail/Leisure Development | Potential Availability | Overall Development Potential |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Christchurch** | | | |
| CH1 – Magistrates/Police Station | Large scale | Long term | Reasonable/Good |
| CH2 – Library/ Druitt Hall | Medium scale | Medium term | Poor |
| CH3 – Vacant Land rear High St. | Small scale | Short term | Good |
| CH4 – Former Post Office | Medium scale | Short to medium term | Good |
| CH5 – Saxon Square | Small scale | Short term | Good |
| CH6 – The Lanes | Medium scale | Short term | Good |
| CH7 – Land Adjoining the Royalty Inn | Small scale | Medium term | Reasonable |
| **Highcliffe** | | | |
| HC1 – Former Market | Small scale | Short term | Good |
| HC2 – Sports and Social Club | Small scale | Medium term | Poor |

7.16 Within the two main centres in the Borough 7 potential development opportunities have been identified in Christchurch, and 2 in Highcliffe. Most of these sites have “reasonable” to “good” potential to deliver additional retail/leisure floorspace, but the largest opportunity (CH 1 – Magistrates/Police Station) may only be a long term opportunity.

7.17 The priority should be to seek to accommodate the need for new development in the short to medium term (up to 2016). As indicated in Table 7.1, the projection for retail floorspace in Christchurch as a whole is up to 6,400 – 7,750 sq m gross up to 2016.

7.18 Short to medium term opportunities in the Borough are perhaps capable of accommodating up to about 5,500 sq m gross of Class A1 to A5 floorspace, and could accommodate a significant amount of the District wide floorspace projection (6,400 – 7,750 sq m gross by 2016). These sites include CH3, CH4, CH5, CH6, CH7 and HC1, all except CH7 could represent short term opportunities. Some of the floorspace projection up to 2016 could be accommodated in the proposed urban extension. The Magistrates/Police Station (CH1) could meet longer term demand after 2016.

7.19 The Council needs to investigate the potential availability of these sites with land owners, and determine whether they are likely to become available for redevelopment by 2016. The potential allocation of these sites will need to be considered in the emerging Site Allocations DPD.

## 8.0 CONCLUSIONS AND POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS

### Strategy for Accommodating Future Growth

8.1 The floorspace projections shown in Volume 1 provide broad guidance. Meeting the projections between 2007 and 2016 is the priority, and longer term projections need to be monitored. The floorspace projections should not be considered to be maximum or minimum limits or targets, particularly when translated into the development plan allocations or when used to guide development control decisions. Floorspace projections should not inhibit competition between retailers when located within centres, subject to the consideration of scale and impact. However, if an out-of-centre proposal exceeds the floorspace projections then the need for the proposal and impact will need to be carefully considered.

8.2 The sequential approach suggests that town and district centre sites should be the first choice for retail and commercial leisure development. The ability of the town and district centres as the preferred locations for retail and leisure development, needs to be considered, particularly for development which may have a relatively large catchment area.

8.3 Some forms of retail or leisure facilities which serve more localised catchment areas may be more appropriate within local centres, rather than the main town/district centres. However, all development should be appropriate in terms of scale and nature to the centre in which it is located.

8.4 The existing stock of premises may have a role to play in accommodating projected growth, and there may be scope to accommodate 900 sq m gross if the vacancy rate can be reduced to 5%.

8.5 The retail capacity analysis in this report assumes that existing retail floorspace can, on average, increase its turnover to sales floorspace densities. A growth rate of 1.5% per annum is assumed for comparison floorspace and 0.3% for convenience floorspace. The adoption of these growth rates represents a balanced approach. The floorspace projections reflect these assumptions. In addition to the growth in sales densities, vacant shops could help to accommodate future growth.

8.6 The new Waitrose store in Christchurch has absorbed the capacity for new convenience retail development for the foreseeable future. However, there could be scope for further qualitative improvements within the main centres, e.g. discount food retailing which is not represented.

8.7 There is more significant scope for comparison shopping. Christchurch town centre is likely to have the best prospects for accommodating growth and new development. The Council needs to investigate potential development sites with landowners, and determine whether they are likely to become available for redevelopment by 2016.

8.8 Based on our analysis the priorities for the two main centres is as follows:

- Christchurch – a mix of unit sizes to attract both chain stores and small independent shops and services; and
- Highcliffe – limited growth in predominantly small to medium sized units (200 sq. m gross or below) suitable for small independent shops and services.

### The Role of Shopping Centres

8.9 PPS6 indicates that local planning authorities should adopt a positive and proactive approach to planning for the future of the centres within their areas, whether planning for growth, consolidation or decline. Local planning authorities are expected to set out a vision and strategy for the pattern and hierarchy of centres, including local centres, within their area. This strategy should set out how the role of different centres will contribute to the overall vision for their area.

8.10 Annex A (Table 1) of PPS6 provides guidance on the designation and role of centres. It suggests that city centres are the highest level of centre and will often be a regional centre and will serve a wide catchment. Town centres are usually the second level of centre after city centres and, in many cases, they will be the principal centre or centres in a local authority's area. In rural areas they are likely to be market towns or other centres of similar size and role which function as important service centres, providing a range of facilities and services for extensive rural catchment areas. In planning the futures of town centres, local planning authorities should consider the function of different parts of the centre and how these contribute to its overall vitality and viability.

8.11 PPS6 suggests that district centres will usually comprise groups of shops often containing at least one supermarket or superstore, and a range of non-retail services, such as banks, building societies and restaurants, as well as local public facilities such as a library. PPS6 states that local centres include a range of small shops of a local nature, serving a small catchment. Typically, local centres might include, amongst other shops, a small supermarket, a newsagent, a sub-post office and a pharmacy. Other facilities could include a hot-food takeaway and launderette.

8.12 PPS6 does not provide a definition of centres below local centres. However, the footnotes to Table 1 indicate that small parades of shops of purely neighbourhood significance are not regarded as centres for purposes of the policy statement. Based on the hierarchy of centres in PPS6, a summary of recommended definitions is set out in Table 8.1.

### Table 8.1: Hierarchy of Centres

| Centre Classification | Definition/Comment |
|---|---|
| Town Centres | Their attractiveness for retailing is derived from a mix of comparison and convenience shopping. Will include the principal centres within a local authority's area. |
| District Centres | As described in Annex A of PPS6. The primary role of these centres will be the provision of convenience shopping, services but with some comparison shopping serving a relatively localised catchment area or shopping of a specialist nature. |
| Local Centres | As described in Annex A of PPS6 reasonably large centres of more than purely neighbourhood significance should be designated local centres. |
| Local Parades | All other small local shopping parades should be designated as neighbourhood parades. |

8.13 A key issue is whether any of the town, district and local centres within the local authority areas should be reclassified from their current Local Plan designation.

8.14 The existing hierarchy of centres in the Borough are as follows:

### Table 8.2: Summary of Centres in Christchurch

| Centre | Current Designation | Number of Outlets | Number of Comparison Shops |
|---|---|---|---|
| Christchurch | Town centre | 209 | 80 |
| Highcliffe | District centre | 120 | 48 |
| Barrack Road | Local centre | 44 | 13 |
| Purewell | Local centre | 27 | 8 |
| Somerford | Out of centre | 8 | 8 |
| Stony Lane | Out of centre | 4 | 4 |
| Bailey Retail Park | Out of centre | 8 | 8 |

8.15 Christchurch clearly performs the role of a Town Centre. Highcliffe has a large number of commercial units which potentially elevates it above the status of a District Centre, when compared with other town and district centres in the other authority areas in Dorset.

8.16 Barrack Road also has a relatively high proportion of commercial units including a Tesco Express store, such that it could be considered to perform the role of a District Centre. Purewell is appropriately designated as a Local Centre.

**Table 8.3: Potential Hierarchy of Centres in Christchurch**

| Status | Centre |
|---|---|
| Town Centres | Christchurch<br>Highcliffe |
| District centres | Barrack Road |
| Local centres | Purewell |
| Parades | All other small clusters of shops |

### Defining Centre Boundaries and Retail Frontages

8.17 PPS6 indicates that local authorities should define the boundary of town and district centres. It states that for purposes of this policy statement, the “centre” for a retail development constitutes the primary shopping area. For all other main town centre uses the “centre” should be regarded as the area embraced by the town centre boundary. The extent of the town centre should be defined on the Proposals Map.

8.18 PPS6 states that the Primary Shopping Area should be the defined area where retail development is concentrated (generally comprising the primary frontages and those secondary frontages which are contiguous and closely related to the primary shopping frontage). The extent of the primary shopping area should be defined on the proposals map. Smaller centres may not have areas of predominantly leisure, business and other main town centre uses adjacent to the primary shopping area, and therefore the town centre may not extend beyond the primary shopping area. Primary frontages are likely to include a high proportion of retail uses. Secondary frontages provide greater opportunities for a diversity of uses.

### Christchurch Borough Council

8.19 The Borough of Christchurch Local Plan (2001) seeks to encourage new shopping development to be concentrated within Christchurch town centre within or adjacent to the existing shopping centre.

8.20 Within the plan Saxon Square/High Street/Church Street/Castle Street and Bargates are designated as ‘Shopping Cores’ and ‘Secondary Shopping Cores’.

8.21 Policy ES2 of the local plan states that within the above named areas planning permission for the change of use of existing ground floor retail premises (Class A1) to non-retail uses will be permitted provided that:

> *1) The Proposed use is for a financial or professional service; food or drink or non-residential institutions falling with use class D1 and leisure and entertainment uses falling within D2;*
>
> *2) Non-retail uses (other than Class A1) will not cumulatively amount to more than 20% of all ground floor units in each of the identified areas;*
>
> *3) Proposal will not result in more than three continuous frontages in non-retail use (other than Class A1);*
>
> *4) A shop front appearance will be retained.*

8.22 For the secondary core areas the policy is slightly more flexible as the change of use of non-residential premises will be permitted provided that it meets part 1 of Policy ES2 above and does not adversely affect the amenities of the local residents.

### *Christchurch Town Centre*

8.23 The shopping policies of the Local Plan for Christchurch town centre appear to be sound given that they are largely in line with PPS6 and the frontage policies are effective at safeguarding the predominance of A1 use within the core shopping areas. However, there may be some need to reorganise the boundaries of the core and secondary areas e.g. re-designating Church Street as secondary frontage and deleting frontage located after the Town Bridge from the secondary core area designation. This suggested re-organisation has been illustrated on maps located in Appendix C.

8.24 It is considered appropriate to re-designate Church Street as secondary frontage due to the diversity of non A1 uses e.g. numerous restaurants, estate agents, hairdressers and dry cleaners. The area is peripheral, dominated by independent rather than multiple retailers and pedestrian flows appear much lower. Therefore, this area of the town is more secondary in nature as per the definition provided by PPS6.

8.25 The secondary frontage which was previously designated after Town Bridge along Castle Street has been deleted as it is considered that the bridge offers a natural geographic end to the town centre. In addition, footfall is low and there are breaks in the frontage. Therefore, it is not considered that these units add to the vitality or viability of the town centre and consequently it is not considered necessary to restrict the use of these units through frontage policies.

## Appendix A

Evaluation of Potential Development Sites

**SITE CH1: Magistrates Court, Police Station and adjoining land, Christchurch**

The police station and former magistrates Court and surface car parks occupy a large site (2.7 ha), which is located on the south west side of Bargates. The site is unallocated in the Local Plan and is adjacent to the designated shopping core. There is a Development and Planning Brief for the site, which envisages high quality mixed use development.

| *Evaluation Criteria* | *Comment* |
|---|---|
| Availability | Long term |
| Scale of Development (retail/leisure/community/cultural) | Large scale (over 10,000 sq m gross at ground floor level. However, the development brief for the site promotes smaller scale facilities. |
| Commercial Potential | This site has good road frontage onto Barrack Road, but has limited frontage on to Bargates. |
| Likely type of development | Mixed uses development including retail and other town centre uses such as leisure, entertainment or offices. Alternatively large format retail/leisure units, e.g. retail warehouses or a large format stores could be accommodated but this would not be consistent with the development Brief, which promotes smaller scale development. |
| Development Constraints | Need to relocate the police station and other uses. Availability of the site for redevelopment is uncertain. There are listed buildings on the site. The site is considered to be ‘edge of centre’ in terms of the sequential approach. |
| Possible Alternative uses | Retention of existing uses or redevelopment for office or residential use. |
| Access | Existing access from Bargates and/or Barrack Road. |
| Overall Development Prospects | Reasonable/Good |

**SITE CH2: Library and Druitt Hall, Christchurch**

The Library and the adjacent Druitt Hall on the south side of the High Street in Christchurch, if available could, be reoccupied by retail/commercial uses. The three storey Library building is listed and is within the designated shopping core. Druitt Hall is located at the end of a narrow alley leading off Christchurch High Street. The Hall and other buildings in the alley are allocated within the Shopping Policy Area where redevelopment for shopping uses will be encouraged. However, work is currently underway to provide a new community hall on an adjacent site with the existing site being returned to public open space.

| | |
|---|---|
|  |  |
| *Evaluation Criteria* | *Comment* |
| Availability | Medium term |
| Scale of Development (retail/leisure/community/cultural) | Medium scale (up to 1,500 sq m gross at ground floor level) |
| Commercial Potential | The library building is located in the heart of the primary shopping area. |
| Likely type of development | Reoccupation of the library building for Class A1, A2 or A3 uses, perhaps with residential or offices on upper floors, and the provision of a courtyard of small boutique/specialist shops, perhaps with residential on upper floors. |
| Development Constraints | The library would need to be relocated. The conversion of the building for alternative uses may be costly. Availability of hall and other buildings for redevelopment is uncertain. No rear service access. We understand the County Council is planning to extend the library, which suggest the premises are unlikely to become available. |
| Possible Alternative uses | Retention of existing library and hall or conversion to office or residential use. |
| Access | Existing access from the High Street. |
| Overall Development Prospects | Poor |

**SITE CH3:  Vacant Land Rear of High Street, Christchurch**

| | |
|---|---|
|  | This small plot of vacant land on the south side of the High Street (adjacent to the Library) is approximately 0.1ha.  It is allocated within the Shopping Policy Area where redevelopment for shopping uses will be encouraged.<br><br>However, there is currently an outline consent on this site for a mixed-use scheme including 17no. 2-bed flats 2no. 1 bed flats, 5no. A1 retail units and 1no. A3 unit. |
| *Evaluation Criteria* | *Comment* |
| Availability | Short term |
| Scale of Development (retail/leisure/community/cultural) | Small scale (up to 500 sq m gross at ground floor level) |
| Commercial Potential | Located in the heart of the town centre and vacant. |
| Likely type of development | The provision of a courtyard of small boutique/specialist shops, perhaps with residential on upper floors. |
| Development Constraints | No rear service access. |
| Possible Alternative uses | Residential development. |
| Access | Existing access from the High Street. |
| Overall Development Prospects | Good |

**SITE CH4: Former Post Office and Shopping Parade, Christchurch**

| | |
|---|---|
|  | The former Post Office and retail parade on the corner of the High Street and Wick Lane occupy a site of about 0.5ha, within the Shopping Core. It is allocated within the Shopping Policy Area where redevelopment for shopping uses will be encouraged. |
| *Evaluation Criteria* | *Comment* |
| Availability | Medium to long term |
| Scale of Development (retail/leisure/community/cultural) | Medium scale (about 2,000 sq m gross at ground floor level – additional floorspace over and above existing). |
| Commercial Potential | Located at the southern end of the town centre but within the Shopping Core. Good road frontage on to the High Street and Wick Lane. The existing retail parade is dated and in need of redevelopment/refurbishment. |
| Likely type of development | High density 2/3 storey development. Extension and redevelopment/refurbishment of the existing retail parade to provide additional higher quality high street shop units. Perhaps with residential or offices on upper floors. |
| Development Constraints | Post office and retail parade owner's intentions are unclear and the availability for redevelopment is uncertain although the Postal Sorting Office has an unimplemented consent to relocate to Avon Trading Park. Other existing occupiers may be on long leases. |
| Possible Alternative uses | Retention of existing postal sorting office and retail parade. Residential or office redevelopment. |
| Access | Existing access from the Wick Lane. |
| Overall Development Prospects | Good |

**SITE CH5: Saxon Square, Christchurch**

| | |
|---|---|
|  | There is a concentration of vacant units at the north west end of the Saxon Square Shopping This area could be refurbished redevelopment to provide modern shop units. Alternatively a major redevelopment of the centre and expansion into the multi-storey car park area could be a long term option.<br><br>However, the site has recently been acquired by Deutsche Bank who envisage incremental redevelopment in 4 phases:<br><br>**Phase 1:** Planning permission for redevelopment of Café Nero<br>**Phase 2:** Improvements to the street scene<br>**Phase 3:** Dealing with vacant shops<br>**Phase 4:** Expansion – Currently this does not relate to the Square itself. Deutsche Bank has yet to confirm specifically what their aspirations are. |
| *Evaluation Criteria* | *Comment* |
| Availability | Short term redevelopment |
| Scale of Development (retail/leisure/community/cultural) | Small scale (about 500 sq m gross ground floor level). |
| Commercial Potential | Located in the heart of the town centre. |
| Likely type of development | Provision of enlarged modern shop units and higher density development at the north west end of the centre. |
| Development Constraints | Development cost of major redevelopment/refurbishment may be prohibitive. |
| Possible Alternative uses | Retention of existing shop units. |
| Access | Existing access. |
| Overall Development Prospects | Good– Small Scale |

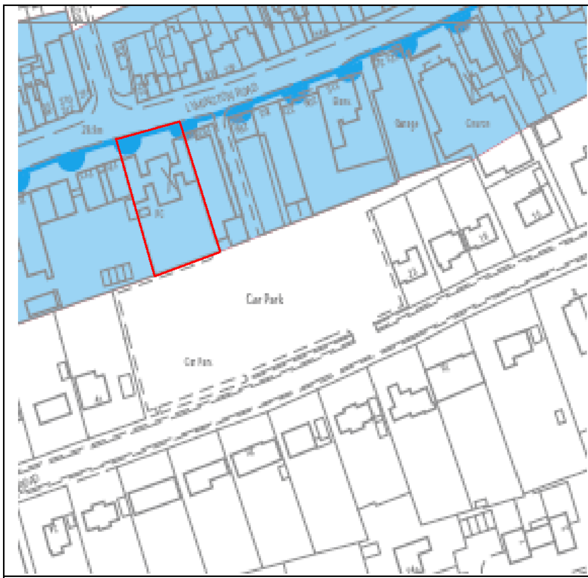
## SITE CH6:  The Lanes, Christchurch

| | |
|---|---|
|  | There is an area of vacant land to the rear of the western end of the High Street. The area extends to approximately 0.27 ha.  The area is known locally as 'the Lanes' and has been the subject of a development framework (2005).<br><br>It is considered that the redevelopment of this area offers the potential to link up with other development opportunities in the Town Centre, located on the Cornfactor site and the Post Office Arcade/Sorting Office site. It is envisaged that any redevelopment of these sites would comprise mixed-use schemes of shops, food and beverage outlets, cultural and community facilities together with residential uses, mostly at or above first floor level. |
| *Evaluation Criteria* | *Comment* |
| Availability | Short term redevelopment |
| Scale of Development (retail/leisure/community/cultural) | Medium scale (up to 1,500 sq m gross ground floor level). |
| Commercial Potential | Located in the heart of the town centre and largely Council owned. |
| Likely type of development | Mixed-use scheme potentially comprising: retail, food and beverage outlets, cultural and community facilities together with residential uses, mostly at or above first floor level. |
| Development Constraints | Access/frontage onto the High Street would be limited unless redevelopment of the existing units on the High Street or a linkage made through them was also considered as part of the scheme. |
| Possible Alternative uses | Office development. |
| Access | Existing accesses from High Street and Soper's Lane. |
| Overall Development Prospects | Good– Medium Scale |

**SITE CH7: Land Adjoining the Royalty Inn, Christchurch**

| | |
|---|---|
|  | This 0.2 ha site was designated within the Local Plan as an area with potential for development for retail use (10,000 – 12,000 sq. ft). It is also considered an important site due to its potential to link to proposed development at the Magistrate's Court car parking area. |
| *Evaluation Criteria* | *Comment* |
| Availability | Medium term redevelopment |
| Scale of Development (retail/leisure/community/cultural) | Small scale up to 10,000 – 12,000 sq ft (930 – 1115 sq. m) gross. However, could be part of larger scale development at Magistrate's court. |
| Commercial Potential | Located in the Bargates area with strong links to the Magistrate's Court development. |
| Likely type of development | Retail in this area would be most appropriate although mixed use development including retail and other town centre uses such as leisure, entertainment or offices would be suitable as part of the Magistrate's court development. Development could involve extension to existing units or comprehensive redevelopment. |
| Development Constraints | Availability of the site for redevelopment is uncertain. The site is considered to be 'edge of centre' in terms of the sequential approach. |
| Possible Alternative uses | Retention of existing shop units. |
| Access | Existing access. |
| Overall Development Prospects | Reasonable. Could potentially depend on other schemes coming forward in this area of the town. |

**SITE HC1: Former Market, Highcliffe**

| | |
|---|---|
|  | This small vacant plot (0.1 ha) is located within the designated primary shopping core and appears to be available for development.<br><br>However, it should be noted that there is an extant permission on this site dated 2005 for a mixed use scheme comprising A1, A2 and 10 no. flats. |
| *Evaluation Criteria* | *Comment* |
| Availability | Short term |
| Scale of Development (retail/leisure/community/cultural) | Small scale (Over 500 sq m gross at ground floor level) |
| Commercial Potential | Within the heart of the core shopping areas with good road frontage on to Lymington Road. It is adjacent to the main public car park. |
| Likely type of development | 1 to 4 retail units, perhaps with residential on upper floors. |
| Development Constraints | No obvious constraints. |
| Possible Alternative uses | Development for high density residential use. |
| Access | Existing access from Lymington Road and/or the public car park to the rear. |
| Overall Development Prospects | Good |

**SITE HC2:  Highcliffe Sports and Social Club, Highcliffe**

|  | The social club occupies a small site (approximately 0.1ha) within the designated primary shopping core. |
|---|---|
| *Evaluation Criteria* | *Comment* |
| Availability | Medium term |
| Scale of Development (retail/leisure/community/cultural) | Small scale (over 500 sq m gross at ground floor level) |
| Commercial Potential | Within the heart of the core shopping areas with good road frontage on to Lymington Road. |
| Likely type of development | 1 to 4 retail units, perhaps with residential on upper floors. |
| Development Constraints | Availability of site for redevelopment is uncertain.  There may be a need to relocate the social club. The loss of this community facility may conflict with policy. |
| Possible Alternative uses | Development for high density residential use. |
| Access | Existing access from Lymington Road. |
| Overall Development Prospects | Poor |

# Appendix B

Summary of Feedback from Stakeholder Workshops

# Christchurch Retail Study Stakeholder Event
# 9th January 2008

- Requires partnership between retailers/council/other stakeholders to improve shopping position.
- Concern over charity shops in town centre, also Highcliffe.
- Car parking is <u>a</u> factor but not all. People shop where you have to pay for parking.
- Council has a role in encouraging retail business – bureaucracy.
- Highcliffe needs to decide what it is – cannot be C. Town Centre.

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- Surprise of acceptance of leakage to outside general acceptance that our catchment area so small.
- Survey identifies we need more floor space but existing vacancies – need to sort out what we've got first – prioritise this first.
- Incentives to traders
    - I. Environment
    - II. Types of shops already there (M&S a draw)
    - III. Choice of shops important
    - IV. Need more specialist shops
    - V. Why is Westbourne so successful at this

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**Aspirations for next 20 years**

- Christchurch & Highcliffe – convenient and cheap car parking (free parking a big draw in Castlepoint.
- Clean streets.
- Highcliffe – cheaper car parking. Wortley Road car park underused.
- Ringwood a good comparable area. Furlong Centre a good example – created. Activity in the High Street.
- Hopeful that M&S/Waitrose will encourage more business.
- Concern over economy – if it drops will have adverse impact on T/C & H/C.
- Highcliffe – destination shoppers – just come into shop and then go.
- Need a big brand shop to draw customers in.

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**Centres Change?**

<u>Highcliffe</u>

- Problems with congestion
    - I. Shut Lymington Road a day a week + free parking
    - II. Market Rd an important issue.

<u>Town Centre</u>

- Retain market – town is busier (but avoid it as too busy).

**Tourism**

- Seasonal nature – impact on parking.
- Unclear about how factored into study.
- Layout/location of parking poor – signage frustrating to find.
- Fragmented car parking.
- Significance of seasonal events – drawing in business – fluctuation of expenditure and value of Food Festival.
- Need to promote Christchurch's offer of multiple independent retailers.
- Value of coach parties.
- Direction to alternative parking; when leaving full car parks.
- Pedestrian signage, way-finding to shops & other attractions.

**Range of retail types:**

- 'Sell' Christchurch on its offer of independent retailers.
- Christchurch's 'unique offer' rather than drawing in big High Street names.
- how to incentivise?
    - subsidies
    - alternative to subsidies?
- too many charity shops and banks.
- charity shops do serve a market however.
- pedestrianisation – how would it affect retail centres?
- Highly important to link high street and Bargates – but how?
- Unique offer: mix of retailers' heritage.

Image, comfort, attractiveness of Christchurch as a shopping centre to <u>spend time</u>:

- Covered area (Saxon Square ?)

Attractive destinations at each end of High Street and Bargates.

- Attractive centre, Saxon Square
- Problem of access between High Street & Bargates
- Access by bus

Late night opening not currently viable due to lack of demand – attempted before but difficult to encourage retailers to open at that time.

Make Sunday shopping more attractive:

- Free, cheaper parking
- Is it worth competing with Castlepoint on Sunday

To what extent has study considered increasing residential development in town centres – mix of uses.

Difficulties of Magistrates Court:

- Fragmentation – need better signing & information
- need to get shoppers through the centre
- need to look for 'USP' not just the same units as elsewhere
- use our image and build on it

Difficulties of through traffic in Highcliffe:

- intimidates shoppers
- Tesco has had some negative effects in Highcliffe
- Could caravan site be redeveloped
- Need to attract activity later – after 5pm.

More summer events eg Festival in Druitt Gardens.
Relax parking charges more often/for events.
More investment in floral displays – Highcliffe poor relation to Christchurch.

**HIGHCLIFFE**

- Need greater variety – too many charity shops
- Market is Tuesday but does it undercut shops
- Highcliffe market needs to be more visible/prominent

**Tapping into niche markets**

- Food Festival
- Arts & Crafts/antiques
- Specialist markets

Market has pedestrianisation effect which seems to attract shoppers

- Look at other closures of High Street

**SAXON SQUARE**

Needs direction, certainty
Need to look at rents, expensive
Units at Pound Close end very small

- Could move TIC into Saxon Square ?
- Library development as a focus

**THE LANES**

Difficulties with disparate site
Need to link Bargates with High Street
Cost of road options

## Appendix C

Recommended PSA boundaries and retail frontages

**KEY**

Proposed PSA Boundary

Proposed Primary Frontage

Proposed Secondary Frontage

nlp Nathaniel Lichfield and Partners

| | |
|---|---|
| Project | Christchurch Retail Study |
| Title | **Christchurch Frontages** |
| Client | Christchurch Borough Council |
| Date | May 2008 |
| Scale | NTS |
| Drawn by | IJ |
| Drg. No | IL30423-06 |

N

IL30423-06


ENV 14, 16-20
H 13, 14
L 1
BIE 1-6
ENV 15
H 2
H 3
E C4
ES 3
ENV 9
ES 2
L 1
ENV 14
ENV 15
P 3
CF 4
KEY
Proposed PSA Boundary
nlp
Nathaniel Lichfield
and Partners
Christchurch Borough Council
N