

East Dorset
District Council



East Dorset Local Plan

Adopted January 2002

East Dorset District Council
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1. The Structure and Contents of the Plan

Introduction

- 1.1. The East Dorset Local Plan covers the administrative area of East Dorset. The Plan is made within the framework set by the Bournemouth, Dorset and Poole Structure Plan dated February 2001. Like the Structure Plan, the Local Plan has a 'base date' of 1994 for the purposes of calculating the levels of development proposed and has an 'end date' of 2011. It replaces all previous Local Plans for the area of East Dorset, except the Minerals and Waste Local Plan which is made by Dorset County Council. Together the Structure Plan, the East Dorset Local Plan and the Dorset Minerals and Waste Local Plan make up the 'Development Plan' for the area.

General Chapters

- 1.2. The early Chapters of the East Dorset Local Plan cover the District as a whole. In addition to this Chapter, which is a guide to how the Plan is laid out, Chapter 2 summarises the regional and structure plan framework within which the Local Plan must work; Chapter 3 sets out a broad description of the present situation in the District; Chapter 4 describes the aims and objectives; and Chapter 5 summarises the general strategy which the Local Plan will follow. This strategy is based on the principle of 'sustainable development' which also underlies national and regional planning guidance, and the Structure Plan.
- 1.3. Chapter 6 contains the main policies which the Planning Authority will operate throughout the District or in particular types of area, such as the Green Belt, which extend across many parts of the District. These policies will be used when the Authority determines planning applications, and will also be taken into account by the Inspectorate and the Secretary of State in deciding appeals, or in dealing with 'called-in' applications. Although they cover a wide range of topics they especially deal with protecting the important 'environmental capital' of the District, and achieving quality in new development. Chapter 7 covers major highway schemes and the local road improvement programme.
- 1.4. Because of the size of East Dorset District, the central part of the Plan has been divided into 'local area' chapters which set out the main development proposals and some specific, local policies for separate parts of the District. This subdivision will allow readers to find, in one place, all the main proposals affecting a particular area. These chapters also contain a more detailed description of the situation in each of these areas. These Chapters therefore especially deal with the way in which development will meet the essential human, social and economic needs of the area.
- 1.5. The chapters cover:
- The Main Settlements
- Corfe Mullen (Chapter 8)
 - Ferndown Town and West Parley (Chapter 9)
 - St. Leonards and St. Ives (Chapter 10)
 - West Moors (Chapter 11)
 - Wimborne, Colehill and Hayes (Chapter 12)
 - Verwood and Three Legged Cross (Chapter 13)

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The Villages

- Alderholt (Chapter 14)
- Cranborne & The Chase Villages (Chapter 15)
- Sturminster Marshall (Chapter 16)
- The Green Belt Villages (Chapter 17)

Environmental Appraisal

- 1.6. A further general chapter is Chapter 18, which contains an environmental assessment of the impact of the policies and proposals as a whole.

Appendices

- 1.7. The Plan concludes with four Appendices. Appendix A sets out the proposed road hierarchy from Primary Routes through to local access roads as it is expected to be in 2011, after the new roads proposed to be built in this period have been opened. Appendix B sets out the car parking that will be expected to be provided as part of various types of development. Appendix C sets out the open space that will be required to serve new residential developments. There is also a short Glossary and an Index.

Proposals Maps

- 1.8. An essential feature of the Local Plan is that it is concerned with specific sites and areas of land. The Plan contains a main Proposals Map which covers the District at a scale of 1: 25,000 and Inset Maps covering local areas at larger scales. These maps are on an Ordnance Survey base, and define the areas to which the various policies and proposals apply. References in this Plan to the Proposals Map embrace both the main Proposals Map and the Insets.

Policies and Proposals

- 1.9. The written part of the Plan contains policies, proposals and supporting text. The policies set out the general approach that the Planning Authority will take towards all development, or particular types of development, or development in particular, defined areas. However, in deciding planning applications, the Authority will always take into account any other material considerations in addition to the policies of the Development Plan. (The Development Plan consists of the Structure Plan, the County Minerals and Waste Local Plan and the East Dorset Local Plan together).
- 1.10. The proposals set out the specific intention that specific areas will be developed for particular uses during the period covered by the Plan. Normally, a planning application for a different type of use on one of these defined sites will be refused, even if it meets the requirements of all the general policies.
- 1.11. The supporting text provides the background information or reasoning to justify the policies and proposals.
- 1.12. The policies or proposals are distinguished from the supporting text by being shown in **bold type** with separate policy numbers. There are some policies which are included in the Plan document which are not themselves planning policies, but are nevertheless policies of the District Council or of the Highway Authority, and which are important for the understanding of the Plan's own policies or proposals. These policies are shown in *italics*.

Supplementary Planning Guidance

- 1.13. There are a number of documents which provide 'Supplementary Planning Guidance' (SPG). These are published from time to time and are adopted by the Planning Authority after public consultation. Among the most important, prepared alongside this Local Plan, is Guidance showing the areas potentially at risk from flooding, which will be subject to Policies WENV2 and WENV3 of the Plan (paras 6.39 and 6.40), and water source protection areas (subject to Policy WENV1, para 6.34). These are issued as SPG because the boundaries are likely to be subject to frequent review and updating.
- 1.14. Other SPG will provide planning briefs for individual development sites. Intending developers should inquire whether briefs have been or are being prepared for their sites before preparing plans or submitting a planning application. Other guidance covers the relationship of trees to development, and the criteria used in consideration of the need for affordable housing. Other SPG takes the form of Conservation Area Statements which describe the qualities and character of individual Conservation Areas. Special attention will be paid to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of any Conservation Area and the Statements will be used as background information in judging how individual development proposals will affect these. Further SPG takes the form of a list of 'locally important buildings' of architectural or historic interest insufficiently important to be included on the national list.
- 1.15. A Cranborne Chase Landscape Assessment for the part of the Cranborne Chase and West Wiltshire Downs Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) which lies within the District is also available and provides background information which will be used in assessing the impact of development in this nationally-important landscape area.
- 1.16. Other guidance is contained within a separate Landscape Assessment for Areas of Great Landscape Value, which describes the qualities and character of individual areas of landscape value outside the AONB. The impact of development proposals on the landscape character of these areas will be taken into account before any decision is taken on a planning application. This Assessment will be used as background information in judging how individual development proposals will affect the character of the area in question.
- 1.17. The County Highway Authority has prepared and issued a volume of "Highway and Planning Guidance for Residential Roads". Other Guidance prepared by the Planning Authority clarifies government regulations on estate agents' boards on residential properties, while another deals with "Design Requirements for Landscaping in New Residential Areas".

Transport Policies and Proposals

- 1.18. The transport content of this Plan has been developed around the framework of the strategic transportation proposals in the Structure Plan. The East Dorset Local Plan elaborates on the Structure Plan proposals and includes additional proposals which the Highway Authority intends to introduce before 2011.
- 1.19. The specific transport proposals set out in the East Dorset Local Plan for public consideration include new road schemes and improvements, traffic management measures, the co-ordination of public transport services, the movement of freight, the control of car and lorry parking and the improvement of cyclist and pedestrian safety.
- 1.20. All the main highway schemes in the area are shown in the Plan, including those which have not yet received planning permission. The government also advises (in Planning Policy Guidance Note 13) that debate possible under the Highways Act 1980 about trunk roads should not be duplicated in the public examination of structure and local plans. Nevertheless, trunk road schemes are included for information in this Plan

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since they can have an important influence on development patterns, and an indication of their priority and timing will be given where this is known.

- 1.21. In the case of Local Authority 'strategic' road proposals included in the Structure Plan, the need for the road will already have been examined, and questions for the East Dorset Local Plan will normally be limited to the detailed alignment of the road. Local Authority roads which are not strategic are not included in the Structure Plan and both the need for the road and the line of the route are matters for the East Dorset Local Plan to consider.
- 1.22. The East Dorset Local Plan contains proposals for major traffic management schemes. It does not, however, concern itself with local traffic management measures (for example, waiting restrictions or speed limits); such matters are dealt with under the relevant road traffic legislation and are not part of the statutory local plan process.
- 1.23. There are two Local Transport Plans of importance for the area: one covers Bournemouth, Poole and Christchurch, the other covers the remaining parts of Dorset. The Local Transport Plans are co-ordinated with the Structure and Local Plans. They look ahead over a period of five years and are subject to annual review.

Responsibilities

- 1.24. The 'Local Planning Authorities' are East Dorset District Council and Dorset County Council. The County Council with its Unitary Authority partners is responsible for the preparation of the Structure Plan and for considering whether District Council local plans conform to the approved Structure Plan. The County Council is also responsible for the planning and control of mineral extraction and waste disposal. The District Council is responsible for preparing and adopting the East Dorset Local Plan (within the framework set by the Structure Plan) and for most decisions on planning applications. Parish and town councils are consulted and have the right to comment on all planning applications in their areas, and are consulted during the preparation of local plans.
- 1.25. Within the East Dorset Local Plan area there are three levels of public responsibility for transport:
 - trunk roads are primarily the responsibility of the Secretary of State for Transport, and as such are managed by the Department of Transport and the Highways Agency;
 - the 'Local Highway Authority' which, in the East Dorset Local Plan area, is the County Council, is responsible for all local highway matters, including public transport, non trunk-road highway planning, maintenance and improvement and traffic management measures including the control of on-street parking;
 - the District Council is responsible for the provision of public off-street car parks.

2. The Regional and Structure Plan Framework

Regional Planning Guidance

2.1. The Secretary of State for the Environment has published Regional Planning Guidance (RPG) for the South West (RPG 10). This sets out the vision for the South West for the period up to 2016 of:

“Developing the region, in a sustainable way, as a national and European region of quality and diversity, where the quality of life for residents, the business community and visitors will be maintained and enhanced.”¹

2.2. Within this vision, the RPG sets out four underlying aims which express at regional level, the four objectives for sustainable development set out by central government.² These are:

- Protection of the environment
- Prosperity for communities and the regional and national economy
- Progress in meeting society’s needs and aspirations
- Prudence in the use and management of resources

2.3. The RPG expresses the vision through principles for future development set out in Policy VIS 1³ which are to:

- Promote a sustainable development pattern and set out a sequential approach to the location of development
- Minimise the need to develop on greenfield sites and to travel
- Develop an integrated approach to urban and rural areas e.g. policies to promote development on previously developed land will not only benefit urban areas: by easing pressures on rural development, they will also help to secure the future of the countryside
- Concentrate growth on the Principal Urban Areas (PUAs) and other designated centres of growth
- Recognise the different roles of appropriate development in market towns and key villages in rural and coastal locations, as places where development will be favoured locally.

2.4. The revised RPG will lead to a review and roll-forward of the Structure Plan and in turn this will require the review of the Local Plan.

Bournemouth, Dorset and Poole Structure Plan

Basic Approach

2.5. The Bournemouth, Dorset and Poole Structure Plan develops and interprets RPG, as well as other Government planning policies, taking ‘sustainable development’ as its guiding principle.⁴ It notes the County’s rich natural and historic environment, but also that the County is less prosperous than often assumed, with GDP *per capita* 10%

¹ Regional Planning Guidance for the South West (RPG 10), September 2001, p 13

² Regional Planning Guidance for the South West (RPG 10), para 2.1

³ Regional Planning Guidance for the South West (RPG 10), Policy VIS 1, p16

⁴ Bournemouth, Dorset and Poole Structure Plan, February 2001, para 2.23

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below national and 12% below European averages. There is a high dependence on investment incomes with wage rates 5% below the national average before the recession of the early 1990's but with household incomes 5% above.

- 2.6. While much new housing in the past has met the demands of in-migrants, many needs, for example for affordable housing, remain unmet. Community life has suffered with the polarisation of communities and the loss of facilities in villages, and the anonymity and lack of cultural and social resources in towns. Pollution and traffic dangers have increased and the distinctive quality of the local environment has been eroded. The Structure Plan's vision is of a County where these challenges are met.

Settlement Strategy

- 2.7. The Structure Plan policy is that the Bournemouth - Poole conurbation will remain the prime centre of the County with its international, national and regional role maintained through the development of major employment, tourism, shopping, education, recreation and community facilities.⁵ The role of a number of towns as local service centres will be enhanced, including Ferndown, Verwood and Wimborne Minster.⁶ In south east Dorset housing growth and other development will be concentrated within the built up areas contained by the existing Green Belt.⁷ The role of villages as self-contained communities will be strengthened by allowing development where it will help to maintain, improve or secure community facilities, affordable local needs housing or broaden employment opportunities. The scale of development will take into account the range of existing infrastructure and village character.⁸ Development in the countryside outside villages will be permitted only where such a location is essential.⁹

Employment

- 2.8. Local plans should ensure an adequate choice of sites is maintained in each district to meet the needs of local firms and for inward investment.¹⁰ In East Dorset about 20 hectares (ha) of land should be developed up to 2011 with major growth nearby at Bournemouth International Airport.¹¹ New employment development should be steered towards sustainable locations¹² and - particularly in the outer urban areas of south East Dorset - provision should be made for employment opportunities which reduce commuting by car.¹³ Provision should also be made for major sites, well-related to residential and other facilities and accessible by public transport, to meet the special needs of companies which require locations with high quality landscaping¹⁴ and for the diversification of the rural economy in locations where commuting by car can be minimised.¹⁵

Housing

- 2.9. The Structure Plan proposes that the rapid housing growth of the past should be restricted. Between 1977 and 1997 nearly 88,000 dwellings were built in Dorset, two-thirds of them in the south east. Past structure plans proposed reductions in the building rate but the reduction has happened more slowly than estimated because

⁵ Bournemouth, Dorset and Poole Structure Plan, February 2001, Settlement Policy A, page 30.

⁶ Bournemouth, Dorset and Poole Structure Plan, February 2001, Settlement Policy C, page 31.

⁷ Bournemouth, Dorset and Poole Structure Plan, February 2001, Settlement Policies D and E, pages 31 and 32.

⁸ Bournemouth, Dorset and Poole Structure Plan, February 2001, Settlement Policies G and H, page 33.

⁹ Bournemouth, Dorset and Poole Structure Plan, February 2001, Settlement Policy I, page 33.

¹⁰ Bournemouth, Dorset and Poole Structure Plan, February 2001, Economy Policy A, page 41

¹¹ Bournemouth, Dorset and Poole Structure Plan, February 2001, Economy Policy E, page 44.

¹² Bournemouth, Dorset and Poole Structure Plan, February 2001, Economy Policy B, page 41.

¹³ Bournemouth, Dorset and Poole Structure Plan, February 2001, Economy Policy C, page 41.

¹⁴ Bournemouth, Dorset and Poole Structure Plan, February 2001, Economy Policy D, page 42.

¹⁵ Bournemouth, Dorset and Poole Structure Plan, February 2001, Economy Policy H, page 46.

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more development was absorbed within the built-up areas than expected.¹⁶ Development in future should be based on the principle of sustainable development.

- 2.10. The previous RPG 10 (1994), on which the Structure Plan is based, proposed an average of 3,150 dwellings a year in Dorset leading to a total of 53,900 dwellings to be constructed between April 1994 and March 2011. The Structure Plan proposes that about 4,400 of these should be in East Dorset.¹⁷ The Structure Plan expects that existing commitments in East Dorset (allocations in existing plans and planning permissions) will provide 1,800 of these on greenfield sites, and 600 within built-up areas and villages. The additional 2,000 dwellings are to be provided on sites within built up areas and villages.¹⁸
- 2.11. A mix of accommodation and housing types is proposed to achieve balanced communities and meet the needs of those with special requirements.¹⁹ New housing will be directed to locations well-related to employment, education, shopping, transport and community facilities to reduce the need to travel.²⁰ Local Plans should provide for the demonstrable, local needs of those unable to compete in the housing market.²¹ Permission would not be given for development in advance of the provision - or the agreement to provide - associated community facilities.²²

Shopping and Community Facilities

- 2.12. The Structure Plan policy is for a sequential approach to the location of new shopping development. In the first instance this should be concentrated in or adjacent to main town centres including Ferndown, Verwood and Wimborne Minster.²³ If no suitable town centre site is available, then a site in a district or local centre should be considered. Only if none of these is available should a less central site be considered. This approach, however, is subject to the need for the development to be compatible with the character of the centre, for it to maintain or enhance the centre's viability, and not adversely affect that of any nearby town, district or local centre, considered as a whole. It must also be easily accessible by a choice of means of transport. Shops in rural areas should be retained or improved.²⁴ The same towns will also be centres for major education, health, sport, recreation, cultural and other community service developments.²⁵ Rural facilities will be supported.²⁶ The Structure Plan recognises the need to develop sporting and recreational facilities in areas of the countryside accessible from the main centres of population by a choice of means of transport, which will reduce pressure on the heritage coast and other sensitive areas.²⁷ Existing Playing Fields are to be protected from development.²⁸

Transport and Telecommunications

- 2.13. The Structure Plan notes that road traffic grew by 54% between 1983 and 1998 and is forecast to grow by another 29% to 2011. The County has very high levels of car

¹⁶ Bournemouth, Dorset and Poole Structure Plan, February 2001, paras 6.1 – 6.3

¹⁷ Bournemouth, Dorset and Poole Structure Plan, February 2001, Housing Policy A, page 62.

¹⁸ Bournemouth, Dorset and Poole Structure Plan, February 2001, Table 6.1 page 63.

¹⁹ Bournemouth, Dorset and Poole Structure Plan, February 2001, Housing Policy B, page 66.

²⁰ Bournemouth, Dorset and Poole Structure Plan, February 2001, Housing Policy C, page 66.

²¹ Bournemouth, Dorset and Poole Structure Plan, February 2001, Housing Policy D, page 67.

²² Bournemouth, Dorset and Poole Structure Plan, February 2001, Housing Policy G, page 68.

²³ Bournemouth, Dorset and Poole Structure Plan, February 2001, Shopping Policy A, page 74.

²⁴ Bournemouth, Dorset and Poole Structure Plan, February 2001, Shopping Policy B, page 74.

²⁵ Bournemouth, Dorset and Poole Structure Plan, February 2001, Community Facilities Policy A, page 75.

²⁶ Bournemouth, Dorset and Poole Structure Plan, February 2001, Community Facilities Policy B, page 76.

²⁷ Bournemouth, Dorset and Poole Structure Plan, February 2001, Community Facilities Policy C, page 76.

²⁸ Bournemouth, Dorset and Poole Structure Plan, February 2001, Community Facilities Policy E, page 77.

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ownership, with 76% of households having access to a car at the time of the 1991 Census. Transport policies seek to follow an integrated strategy for safe and efficient movement of people and goods, making the best use of existing infrastructure, which at the same time reduces the need to travel, controls the rate of traffic growth, promotes public transport and reduces the environmental impact of transport.²⁹ Local Plans must provide for patterns of land use and transport infrastructure which make alternatives to the car more practical, increase accessibility to local services and allow for multi-purpose journeys.³⁰ Major employment and other travel intensive land uses should be located at sites well-served by public transport.³¹

- 2.14. Priority for investment in transportation is given to:
- measures which support the regeneration of the Weymouth and Portland area
 - improving north-south links from the port of Poole to the M4/M5
 - improving sustainable forms of movement within the south east Dorset conurbation.³²
- 2.15. The management of traffic demand is proposed in areas of congestion or where the impacts of traffic are high.³³ This is supported by a parking strategy which includes the restriction of long-stay commuter parking in town centres.³⁴ Maximum and operational minimum standards of parking provision in new developments are to be established at a strategic level and applied through local plans. They will reflect the level of accessibility of the location³⁵ but will avoid compromising the viability of town centres or allowing competition in terms of parking between neighbouring centres.³⁶
- 2.16. A network of pedestrian and cycle routes is proposed, with priority given to a comprehensive network within the conurbation and the main towns, including Ferndown, Verwood and Wimborne Minster.³⁷ Public transport is also supported, by providing new development in locations accessible and attractive to public transport, by ensuring public transport is provided as a key part of major developments, and is included in traffic management measures.³⁸ Bus priority schemes are to be concentrated on the strategic network of high frequency bus services within the conurbation and the main towns³⁹ and new development areas should be designed for efficient bus operation.⁴⁰
- 2.17. The strategic highway network will be managed to ensure it is operating efficiently: measures will include junction improvements and restrictions on parking, turning and accesses to new developments.⁴¹ Major improvements to the strategic highway network will be progressed only as part of the integrated transport strategy and where they are essential to meet economic objectives, ameliorate unacceptable environmental conditions, there is no cheaper alternative and the environmental impact of the new scheme accords with the overall aims of the Structure Plan.⁴²
- 2.18. National Trunk Road schemes appearing in the Structure Plan include the A31 Stag Gate Improvement (providing a link to the proposed Spetisbury, Charlton Marshall and Sturminster Marshall Bypass) and the A31 to Poole Link.⁴³ This last scheme has been

²⁹ Bournemouth, Dorset and Poole Structure Plan, February 2001, Transportation Policy A, page 82.

³⁰ Bournemouth, Dorset and Poole Structure Plan, February 2001, Transportation Policy B, page 82.

³¹ Bournemouth, Dorset and Poole Structure Plan, February 2001, Transportation Policy C, page 83.

³² Bournemouth, Dorset and Poole Structure Plan, February 2001, Transportation Policy D, page 83.

³³ Bournemouth, Dorset and Poole Structure Plan, February 2001, Transportation Policy E, page 84.

³⁴ Bournemouth, Dorset and Poole Structure Plan, February 2001, Transportation Policy F, page 84.

³⁵ Bournemouth, Dorset and Poole Structure Plan, February 2001, Transportation Policy G, page 85.

³⁶ Bournemouth, Dorset and Poole Structure Plan, February 2001, Transportation Policy H, page 85.

³⁷ Bournemouth, Dorset and Poole Structure Plan, February 2001, Transportation Policy I, page 85.

³⁸ Bournemouth, Dorset and Poole Structure Plan, February 2001, Transportation Policy J, page 86.

³⁹ Bournemouth, Dorset and Poole Structure Plan, February 2001, Transportation Policy K, page 86.

⁴⁰ Bournemouth, Dorset and Poole Structure Plan, February 2001, Transportation Policy M, page 87.

⁴¹ Bournemouth, Dorset and Poole Structure Plan, February 2001, Transportation Policy V, page 91.

⁴² Bournemouth, Dorset and Poole Structure Plan, February 2001, Transportation Policy U, page 90.

⁴³ Bournemouth, Dorset and Poole Structure Plan, February 2001, Transportation Policy W, page 92.

Chapter 2: The Regional and Structure Plan Framework

dropped from the national programme since the Structure Plan was prepared, and the highway authorities are considering options to address the situation. However, the reservation still remains within the Structure Plan and this Local Plan.

- 2.19. Local strategic schemes include improvements along the A350 corridor, including the Spetisbury, Charlton Marshall and Sturminster Marshall Bypass, part of which will fall within East Dorset, and improvements to the C13 north of Blandford.⁴⁴ There are also reservations for other schemes including the A3060 Castle Lane Relief Road, which is largely within Bournemouth Borough but crosses the extreme south of the East Dorset area at West Parley.⁴⁵
- 2.20. Other County schemes in East Dorset are linked to major developments including those in Verwood, and developer contributions will be used towards their construction costs⁴⁶:
- Bournemouth International Airport Link Road/B3073 Improvements
 - B3072 Verwood and Three Legged Cross Improvement
 - B3072 West Moors Bypass

Minerals, Waste and Energy

- 2.21. The Structure Plan contains a substantial section dealing with minerals, waste and energy. As minerals and waste are dealt with in the separate County Minerals and Waste Local Plan, this section is not summarised here. The Structure Plan encourages proposals for the generation of energy from renewable resources. Proposals should be sited close to the resource so as to achieve a significant net energy gain.⁴⁷ Proposals for the construction of buildings should take into account energy efficiency in their design.⁴⁸

The Environment

- 2.22. The Structure Plan closes with a substantial section containing policies which seek to protect the environment, including nature conservation sites, specially protected species or their habitats, landscape, the urban environment, parks and open spaces, areas at risk from flooding, good agricultural land, forests and woodlands, the character of settlements and the historic environment.

The East Dorset Local Plan

- 2.23. The East Dorset Local Plan has the task of interpreting the Regional and Structure Plan policies against the background of local circumstances. It may also introduce other policies and proposals to meet specific local problems or opportunities, but without creating conflict with the County or the Regional planning strategies. The next chapter therefore looks at these local circumstances.

⁴⁴ Bournemouth, Dorset and Poole Structure Plan, February 2001, Transportation Policy X, page 92.

⁴⁵ Bournemouth, Dorset and Poole Structure Plan, February 2001, Transportation Policy Y, page 93.

⁴⁶ Bournemouth, Dorset and Poole Structure Plan, February 2001, Transportation Policy Z, page 94.

⁴⁷ Bournemouth, Dorset and Poole Structure Plan, February 2001, Energy Policy A, page 103.

⁴⁸ Bournemouth, Dorset and Poole Structure Plan, February 2001, Energy Policy B, page 103.

Guide to Parishes Named in the Text

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3. The Existing Situation

Introduction

- 3.1. Each of the chapters which contains the proposals and policies for an individual local area of the District includes a description of the local situation. To avoid repetition, this Chapter, Chapter 3 of the East Dorset Local Plan, therefore deals with the District as a whole in very general terms, and without great local detail.
- 3.2. East Dorset is of medium size both in area and in population. It covers 355 km² (137 square miles) and its normally resident population at the 1991 Census stood at just under 77,000. The estimate for the population at mid-1996 stood at over 80,000. The District is bordered on the east by the River Avon and its valley, which separates it from the New Forest. The River Stour runs across the southern part of the District, dividing the larger part of its area from the coastal towns of Poole, Bournemouth and Christchurch, which form the core of the South East Dorset conurbation. In this century, the conurbation has expanded across this barrier, to create new towns on the northern side of the river in East Dorset, linked to the south by a limited number of river crossings. Most of the area of East Dorset is rural, although the majority of its population live in the villages and towns of the south and east.

Landscape

- 3.3. The Countryside Commission's Countryside Character approach provides a general analysis of the landscape of England. East Dorset falls within two of the Joint Character Areas: The Dorset Downs and Cranborne Chase, and the Dorset Heaths. The landscape character of the District is closely related to the underlying rocks. The north-western part lies on chalk (see Figure 3.1), which forms downland rising north westward towards the heart of Cranborne Chase.

Figure 3.1 Geology of East Dorset District

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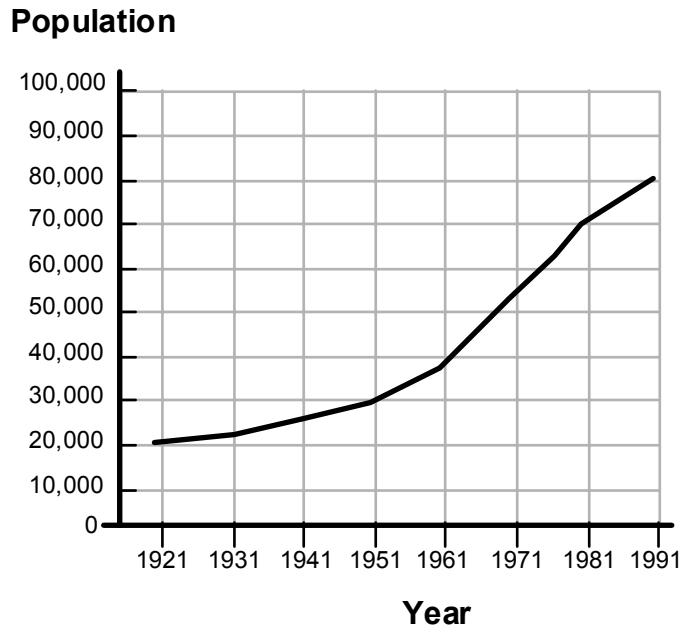
Chapter 3: The Existing Situation

- 3.4. A large part of this downland is included in the Cranborne Chase and West Wiltshire Downs Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB). Settlements are sparse, being generally confined to low land within the river valleys, and the landscape is open and rolling with scattered woods, many of which are ancient remnants of The Chase's forests. Land ownership is concentrated, with a small number of major estates, centred on a few great houses. The area is one of the richest in Britain in archæological remains, forming an historic landscape of great importance.
- 3.5. The Countryside Commission has carried out and published a study of the landscape character of the area (The Cranborne Chase and West Wiltshire Downs Landscape, 1995). The District Council has carried out and published a more detailed assessment of the landscape of the part of the AONB within its borders, and a second study, also published, of the landscape of much of the remainder of the District, which has provided the basis for local policies of landscape protection included in this Plan.
- 3.6. The south-eastern part of the District lies on sands and clays. The area is one of heaths, woodlands and extensive coniferous plantations interspersed with an intimate landscape of small fields separated by hedgerows. The area contains a number of large modern suburban developments, often of a low density and well-planted with pines and other, ornamental trees, and with scattered housing in the remainder of the countryside. Although of a quite different character to the Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty, much of this landscape is very attractive, although parts have been spoiled by the pressures and the developments of the urban fringe of the conurbation.
- 3.7. The heathlands of this area are of international importance for wildlife and they and areas formerly covered by heathland host a number of protected species. Many of them have been designated as Special Protection Areas under the EC Birds Directive and many are proposed Special Areas of Conservation under the Habitats Directive, giving them additional protection. In addition, several which include areas of wet heath have been designated as sites under the Ramsar Convention for the protection of wetlands. A survey has been carried out which provides the basis of the definition of the Sites of Nature Conservation Importance (SNCIs) shown in this Plan in addition to the SSSIs.
- 3.8. The Avon Valley has been declared an Environmentally Sensitive Area (ESA) by the government because of the traditional pastoral landscape that has evolved over the centuries through the farming of the fertile flood plains. The combination of grassland, streams, small woods, scrub and willow create a varied lowland landscape of high value. Historically the most important features are the remains of the water meadow systems. These are linked to a time when artificial flooding of the meadows was an essential part of the farming system. Landowners and occupiers entering the scheme are required to farm in sympathy with the special environment of the Avon Valley ESA.

Population and Settlement Pattern

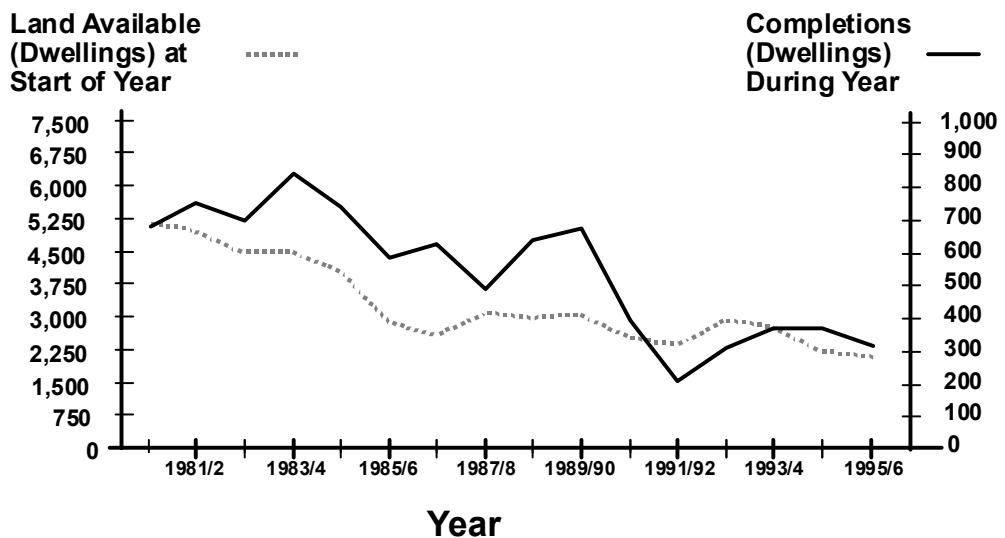
- 3.9. At the beginning of the twentieth century, Wimborne Minster was the main town, a market centre serving an almost entirely rural area. Urban development and population growth since the Second World War has been extremely rapid, transforming the District (see Figure 3.2).

Figure 3.2: Population Growth in East Dorset 1921 -91



3.10. There has been a corresponding growth in housing. Figure 3.3 shows the level of completions since 1980/81 and the amount of housing land available at the start of each fiscal year. The rate of house building was at its highest in the late 1970s with completions at around 900 dwellings in several years. Since then there has been a general downward trend in the numbers built (despite an isolated peak in 1989/90) although there have been local spurts of development in individual settlements at different times. The downward trend has been affected by both long term and short term economic factors and has been accompanied by an overall decline in the amount of development sites available.

Figure 3.3 Housing Completions and Land Availability



3.11. Urban development and population growth have been concentrated in the southern and eastern parishes of the District, where it borders the main part of the conurbation (Figure 3.4), with an extended 'finger' of growth stretching up through Verwood to Alderholt on the east.

Figure 3.4 Parish Population Growth 1961 - 91

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- 3.12. The high rate of urban development has imposed severe pressures on the environment of the District, including the landscape, towns, road network, areas of wildlife interest, and river systems. The need to control these pressures underlay the creation of the South East Dorset Green Belt by the 1980 South East Dorset Structure Plan. The protection of wildlife, countryside and landscape from development pressures remains a major issue for the District Plan. Within the urban areas, the development pressures have led to infill development and the need to protect established urban environments.
- 3.13. The rapid development of the south and east of the District has led to a sharp contrast between the urban and the rural areas. Figure 3.5 shows the parish population densities. There is no gradual transition, but a clear distinction between the denser, urbanised parishes and the remaining rural areas. This can be attributed partly to the difference in character between the undeveloped chalk downland and the clay and sand lowlands where the development has taken place, and partly to the success of planning policies which have concentrated development into the new settlements of the south and east and have sought with some success to prevent a scatter of development in the remainder of the countryside.

Figure 3.5 Parish Population Density 1991

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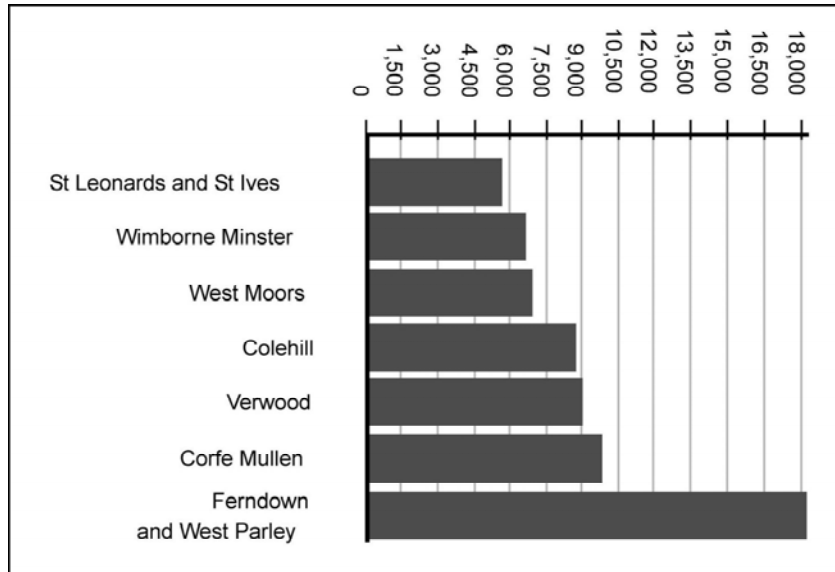
The Urban Settlements

- 3.14. The settlements in the parishes of the south and east - Corfe Mullen, Colehill, Ferndown, West Parley, West Moors, St. Leonards and St. Ives and Verwood - represent the outer edge of the south east Dorset conurbation, with strong functional links between them and the coastal towns to the south. Wimborne Minster, because of its historical development as a country market town, differs in many respects, although now it too is closely linked to the conurbation. Its strong historic character, which is reflected in the Conservation Areas which cover extensive parts of the town, continues to attract business, residents and tourists.
- 3.15. The other settlements, although each with its own individuality, share a number of characteristics. In physical terms these settlements form free-standing urban areas, separated from each other and from the main mass of the conurbation to the south by wedges and corridors of open country, of which the Stour Valley is one of the most important. They are broadly comparable in size, ranging from 5,600 to 10,000 in total population, with the exception of Ferndown and West Parley, two settlements which form a single continuous built-up area and have a combined population approaching 19,000 (Figure 3.6). Because of their limited size, nowhere within the settlements is

Chapter 3: The Existing Situation

more than half a mile from open country. This, and the separate identities conferred on them by their physical separation, are two important benefits of the Green Belt.

**Figure 3.6 Sizes of Main Built-up Areas
(Figures taken from 1991 Census)**



- 3.16. The housing which is the main land use in each of the settlements is generally low-density and suburban in character and, being relatively recently-built, includes few outworn dwellings or ones lacking modern amenities. Wimborne Minster is exceptional in having an older and higher-density housing stock. In all the settlements there have been increases in the number of flats in recent years. A high proportion (87%) of housing in the main settlements is owner-occupied. House prices are high both compared to the rest of Dorset and in relation to wage levels, partly because the settlements fall within the upper end of the wider, south east Dorset housing market.
- 3.17. East Dorset has substantial employment within its own borders. Overall, the District at the time of the 1991 Census provided about 21,300 jobs, while about 35,100 residents of the District were in work or unemployed. This represents a "job ratio" of jobs to workers of about 0.6 overall. There was therefore work within the District's borders equal to slightly more than six out of ten of the local residents who had jobs, who were seeking work or who were self employed. Some parts of the District had even higher 'job ratios'. Figure 3.7 shows the job ratios for the different wards or parishes. The Wimborne Minster ward (which includes Pamphill) had the highest ratio, of over 1.5: a surplus of jobs over local 'economically active' residents (although the figure falls sharply if residents from Colehill are also included). Ferndown and Verwood were the other two centres where the number of jobs broadly balanced locally resident workers and job seekers. By contrast, many of the suburban areas such as Alderholt, Colehill, Corfe Mullen, West Parley and West Moors had little local employment and low ratios, and were largely commuter settlements. Local employment was also relatively scarce in the rural areas of the north and west of the District.

Figure 3.7 Job Ratios by Parish and Rural Wards

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- 3.18. Although the balance of local jobs to the workforce is important as an indicator of the opportunity for working locally, each person's choice of where to work is dependent on many other factors such as the variety and quality of the jobs on offer and the costs of travel. In many cases, workers will have chosen to live in the area when they already held a job elsewhere. The overall figures therefore mask a much larger outflow of workers from the District, against which has to be set the inflow of workers from outside. Overall, almost 49% of the District's workers travelled outside the District to work. Figure 3.8 shows the percentage of the employed in each parish working outside the District: the role of the southern and eastern parishes - not only the towns but also the rural areas - as 'commuter belt' areas for the coastal towns to the south, is clearly shown.

Figure 3.8 Percentage of Employees and Self Employed Working Outside East Dorset District

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- 3.19. Figure 3.9 shows for each of the wards or the parishes the proportion of the workforce travelling over 5 km to work. The figures exclude 'offshore' workers or those who did not have a fixed place of work. The figures show the long distances which were commonly travelled in this area: everywhere over 50% of the workforce travelled 5km or more. Wimborne, Ferndown, West Moors and Corfe Mullen were among the areas with the lower percentages. The highest journey lengths were in the rural parishes with Holt, Vale of Allen and Sixpenny Handley all having over 75% of their workforce travelling this distance. For comparison, the figure for Dorset as a whole was 44% travelling 5km or more.
- 3.20. The dependence on the coastal towns to the south is also evident in shopping patterns. Only Wimborne and Ferndown provide substantial shopping centres of their own. Wimborne, Ferndown and Verwood all have superstores developed since 1980. The remaining settlements support only limited groups of shops and individual supermarkets. They, and the District as a whole, depend heavily on Wimborne, Ferndown and Verwood and upon external shopping centres in Poole, Bournemouth, Christchurch, Blandford, Ringwood and Salisbury.

Figure 3.9 Proportion of Employed and Self Employed Travelling Over 5km to Work

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- 3.21. In terms of its retail spending, the District, and especially the towns and rural parishes in the southern part, are among the most wealthy in the County, with spending per head twice that of much of rural Dorset. In terms of floorspace, the largest centre in the District is Ferndown, with about 90,000 square feet of floorspace compared with a little under 80,000 square feet in Wimborne. However, Ferndown has fewer and larger shops, and a smaller proportion of durable goods shops. It also has fewer services and other businesses than Wimborne. Verwood, the third centre, is far smaller, with around 30,000 square feet of floorspace.
- 3.22. Although both draw their trade from the surrounding parishes, Wimborne is more dominant within its own area than Ferndown, taking 50% or 60% of the convenience shopping trade (these are such goods as food and drinks) and around 40% of the durable spending (such as furniture and electrical goods) from the heart of its catchment area. This compares with Ferndown's 40% to 50% of the convenience and up to 10% of the durable spending from the core of its own catchment area. In part this is because Wimborne's catchment area, apart from the town itself and the areas of Colehill and Merley, consists mainly of the rural parishes to the north and west, whereas Ferndown draws its trade from a narrower and more urban area including Parley, West Moors and St. Leonards and St. Ives, where there are other, competing

Chapter 3: The Existing Situation

- local centres. Verwood's shops are far less dominant, although the centre draws its business not only from the town, but from the rural parishes to the north and west, and to some extent from Alderholt.
- 3.23. It is in terms of durable goods spending, though, that the importance of the coastal towns is most pronounced, with Bournemouth's catchment extending up the eastern side of the District, and Poole's on the west. Here again there is a contrast between Wimborne and Ferndown: Wimborne is the dominant centre for durable spending within its own immediate area but, even within Ferndown itself, Bournemouth takes a larger share of the local durables trade than does Ferndown's own town centre. Other major suburban shopping facilities in the coastal towns also have a significant impact on the District, with major out of centre stores such as Tesco at Fleetsbridge drawing significant amounts of trade from some southern parishes.
- 3.24. The rapid growth of the main settlements in the southern part of the District has, in many cases, outstripped the provision of infrastructure and facilities. In terms of transport, major problems have arisen as a result of the growth in road traffic. This itself has been partly the product of the growth of housing and employment in the area on a low-density, dispersed pattern. The problems are most severe in the main urban areas and are partly those of congestion, and partly those of environmental damage within residential streets and town centres. There are only very limited opportunities for major new road construction within the built-up areas without causing quite unacceptable impacts on the urban fabric and living conditions, even if enough money could be found.
- 3.25. In terms of social facilities, both Ferndown and Wimborne have substantial community centres, and it is these two towns which also have the two main sports centres. The other main settlements generally have well-equipped meeting halls, but on a substantially smaller scale. There is a shortfall of playing fields and open space in several areas. The school system has generally kept pace with growth, but continued housing development requires further provision. There are other needs for further facilities which must be considered in the Local Plan.
- 3.26. The need for social and recreational facilities in the towns also depends on the age and family structure of the population. Households are small (2.4 persons on average) and there is a high proportion of pensioners. The 1991 Census showed that only 19% of households in the Plan area are the 'traditional' family of two parents with dependent children. Single parent households are few: only 2% of households are single parents with dependent children. Far more households (39%) are couples with no children or whose children no longer live with them. Many (23%) are single person households without children. 35% of households consist entirely of pensioners, and 16% of households are pensioners living alone. The highest concentration of pensioners is in the settlements in the south and east, especially Ferndown, West Parley, West Moors and St. Leonards and St. Ives (Figure 3.10).
- 3.27. The high proportion of the elderly and of small households creates particular requirements for social facilities, recreational provision, public transport and other services, both in the main urban areas and in the countryside.

Figure 3.10 Percentage of Resident Population Aged 65 and over.

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The Green Belt Countryside

- 3.28. The settlements of the south of the District are surrounded by the South East Dorset Green Belt. The purposes of the Green Belt are to separate the individual settlements, maintaining their distinctive identities, and to protect an area of open land around the outer edges of the conurbation. The development pressures which have fallen on the settlements have also had a strong impact on the Green Belt countryside. Much of the housing in the Green Belt areas is occupied by commuters working within the conurbation. New housing has been built as infill within villages and as agricultural dwellings in the countryside, many on small holdings where farming is only one of the sources of the household income. Land has moved out of agricultural use, to be replaced by horse keep, country parks, golf courses, playing fields and other uses serving the urban areas. Many of these are entirely appropriate to the Green Belt, but there has been an accompanying decline in the quality of the landscape with fencing, small buildings, parking areas, floodlighting, pylon lines and new or widened roads eroding the rural character. The protection of this area from further damage, while successfully accommodating the legitimate land uses for the urban fringe, is a major issue for the District Plan.

Figure 3.11 Nature Conservation Sites, Green Belt and Urban Areas

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- 3.29. The high nature conservation interest of much of this area has already been noted. Figure 3.11 shows the concentration of nature conservation sites within the Green Belt and their close proximity to the urban areas. Many of these Sites of Special Scientific Interest are heathlands. Much of the urban development in the earlier part of this century also took place on the heaths, which were then regarded as waste land of little value. As a result, urban areas in many places now immediately adjoin the remaining heathlands, which are not only subject to casual damage such as the dumping of garden waste, or from domestic animals, but are heavily used and highly valued as uncontrolled recreational sites by the urban populations. Other SSSIs, such as Bugden's Copse and Meadows at Verwood and the Moors River SSSI, also lie close to the main urban areas or are subject to urban pressures. In the case of the Moors River, pollution from surface water drainage from the hard surface areas of the towns and industrial areas is a particular problem, although sewage effluent has recently been diverted away from the river.
- 3.30. The protection of these fragile areas through land-use policies and through involvement in their management by the local councils is an important aspect of the planning of the area. At the same time, the need for roads, sewers, open space, gas, water and other services to the towns, which must occupy or pass through these intervening areas, has to be balanced against the needs of nature conservation.

Chapter 3: The Existing Situation

The Rural Settlements

- 3.31. Away from the south-eastern part of the District development pressures have been substantially less. The chalk downland in particular has been protected against urbanisation, although other landscape changes have taken place as farming and forestry practices have changed. There are no substantial towns in this part of the District and the villages are generally very small, with limited facilities. Many of them are highly attractive and, being of architectural and historic interest, have been designated as Conservation Areas. Of the dwellings in the rural parishes a lower proportion (69%) are owner-occupied, 11% are rented from a housing association, 11% are rented privately, and 9% are tied cottages.
- 3.32. Alderholt, Cranborne, Sixpenny Handley and Sturminster Marshall are the main local centres, providing some services to their surrounding areas. However, of these, Sturminster Marshall and Alderholt have both undergone major development in recent years which has been related more to overspill development from south east Dorset than to any local needs. Nevertheless, this development, together with more limited but still substantial growth at Cranborne and Sixpenny Handley, has served to support the local services provided by these village centres. However, the rural area is dependent on outside towns, including those in the south of the District, Blandford, Salisbury and Ringwood for much of its shopping, employment and secondary education needs.
- 3.33. The main problems in this part of the District are the provision of services, including local jobs, transport to service and employment centres, adequate social facilities and housing for which local people can successfully compete against the demands of incomers.
- 3.34. While the chalk downland is an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty, substantial parts of the remainder, such as the upper Stour Valley, the hills around Henbury to the west of Corfe Mullen, the area around Matchams View above the Avon and a crescent of land running northwards from Holt Heath to Alderholt, are also landscapes of great attractiveness and of considerable local importance, although of a very different character. A key further issue is therefore the protection of the landscape, and of the villages which are frequently important elements within it, while meeting specific local needs. There is a considerable danger that the urban pressures could extend from the urban and Green Belt parishes of the south of the District to transform the character of the rural north and west, as has already happened at Sturminster Marshall and Alderholt.
- 3.35. The major estates are important factors in the protection of the area and their role is likely to continue in the future. In recent years some estates have moved towards a more comprehensive and explicit management of development, landscape and building conservation, combining these different aspects in overall estate plans.

Transport

Car Ownership

- 3.36. East Dorset is an area of high car ownership. Figure 3.12 shows the proportion of households in each parish which lack a car. Over much of the rural area, the proportion of households without a car is generally less than 10%, the exceptions being Sixpenny Handley, Wimborne St. Giles and Cranborne (all about 16%-17%). Of the urban areas, Ferndown, West Moors and Wimborne, have a higher proportion of households without a car, rising to a maximum of 30%. However, Alderholt, St. Leonards and West Parley are comparable to the rural areas with less than 10% of households without a car. High car ownership, coupled with a relatively low development density in most of the towns and the scattered rural settlement, has increased the dominance of the private car as the main means of transport for most journeys.

Figure 3.12 Proportion of Households with One or More Cars

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Public Transport

- 3.37. The reliance on the car is reinforced by the poor public transport network. East Dorset is particularly lacking in public transport, especially in the rural parishes, and there is neither a railway station nor rail line within the District. Table 3.1, which analyses the journey to work by mode of travel, shows the low use of public transport and the high use of the car, with comparative figures for Dorset as a whole.

Chapter 3: The Existing Situation

Table 3.1 Mode of Journey to Work

District of Residence

Mode of Travel to Work	East Dorset (%)	Dorset (%)
Rail	0.4	0.9
Bus	1.5	5.2
Car Driver	73.4	60.9
Car Passenger	6.1	7.1
Motor Cycle	2.2	2.4
Pedal Cycle	3.5	4.1
Walk	4.8	11.3
Other	0.4	0.5
Works at Home	7.5	7.5

Table 3.1 Journey to Work by Mode of Travel (1991 Census)

Figure 3.13 Diagram of Bus Frequencies

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- 3.38. The clear distinction between the more sparsely settled rural areas and the denser areas of population in the south and east of the District, close to the main travel to work and shopping centres of Bournemouth and Poole, is reflected in the higher levels of bus provision in the south and east (see Figure 3.13). The rural areas have only an infrequent service or no daily service at all. Deregulation of bus services and limited public funds mean that rural areas are likely to remain highly dependent upon car travel.
- 3.39. Despite comparatively high household car ownership, many individuals still depend on public transport. The deregulation of bus services means that operators only offer services where they are commercially viable. Local Authorities, however, have the

Chapter 3: The Existing Situation

responsibility to subsidise socially necessary bus services by competitive tendering where these are not provided by the free market. In recent years the number of services which the operators have supported without subsidy has fallen, and the level of subsidies from local authorities has increased rapidly.

Roads and Traffic

- 3.40. The road links from East Dorset towards the South East Region have improved considerably in recent years with the M3, the M27 and the A31 providing dual carriageway links to London and to south Hampshire and beyond. The main road connections from East Dorset to the west, along the A31 and the A35, are improving with bypasses for most of the towns or villages either built or planned. Connections northwards to the regional and national road networks are relatively poor, creating lengthy journeys and environmental problems on existing roads.
- 3.41. Traffic problems occur where the traffic flows are too great for the capacity of the road system, and this is usually reflected in congestion and accidents. The effects of congestion are felt most strongly in the built up areas in the south and east of the District, with increased flows during peak periods causing many commuters to use unsuitable side roads in order to avoid queues. On many roads the volume of car and lorry traffic acts as a serious deterrent to pedestrians and cyclists. While there is some potential for road improvements to ease the effects of congestion, further road building is not generally likely to provide a sustainable solution to the problem.
- 3.42. Environmental problems may emerge even where roads are adequate to carry traffic flows safely, but pass through sensitive areas such as residential streets, town or village centres or past schools and playgrounds. Few of the roads in the District have been built as specialised traffic routes and many carry substantial flows of heavy goods vehicles. New bypass roads to relieve the environmental pressures in towns and villages are costly and often raise equally serious, but different problems because of their impact on farming, forests, landscape, wildlife or archæology.

Figure 3.14 Main Road Network of the District

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- 3.43. The major road network presently serving the District is shown on Figure 3.14. Table 3.2 shows the 24 hour annual average daily traffic flows (AADF) for the most heavily used roads in the District Plan area during the 'low season' (spring and autumn). It also shows the number of medium and heavy goods vehicles using these roads.

Chapter 3: The Existing Situation

Table 3.2 Two-way Traffic Flows on Major Roads in East Dorset for 1995

Source: Transport Policies and Programme 1997/98

Primary Routes:

Location	Traffic Flow AADF	Daily Medium/ Heavy Goods Vehicles
1 A31(T) Stag Lodge	10,000	1,000
2 A31(T) Lake Farm, (east of Lake Gates) Wimborne	13,000	1,400
3 A31(T) at Ham Lane, Wimborne	25,000	2,400
4 A31(T) at Ameysford, Ferndown	23,000	3,600
5 A31(T) at Station Road, West Moors	21,000	2,300
6 A31(T) at Trickett's Cross	41,000	3,500
7 A31(T) East of Ashley Heath (Verwood Road)	66,000	6,000
8 A338 Bournemouth Spur Road	35,000	1,500
9 A348 Ringwood Road, Longham	24,000	1,950
10 A350 Sturminster Marshall	10,000	1,000
11 A354 Cashmoor	5,000	500

County Distributor Routes:

Location	Traffic Flow AADF	Daily Medium/ Heavy Goods Vehicles
12 A347 New Road, Parley	20,000	500
13 B3072 Potterne, Verwood	7,000	350
14 B3072 junction with A31	13,000	700
15 B3078 Walford, Colehill	7,000	n/a
16 B3081 Ebblake	8,000	300

Other Routes:

Location	Traffic Flow AADF	Daily Medium/ Heavy Goods Vehicles
17 B3078 Julian's Bridge, Wimborne	9,000	400
18 B3073 Brookside Farm, Wimborne	14,000	600
19 C2 Woolsbridge	8,000	600

3.44. Tourism is an important part of the economy in Dorset and traffic problems on roads, particularly around the coast, increase during the summer months. High season (summer) traffic volumes are some 10-15% higher than the low season flows on the A31 Trunk Road, reflecting the recreational nature of this route.

3.45. Overall, traffic on main routes in the south-east Dorset conurbation, including the A31 Trunk Road, grew by an average of 40% between 1983 and 1993. This high growth in average daily flows was also reflected in rural Dorset, with average increases in flows of 39% on main routes over the same period. Approximately 9% of the daily traffic flow on the main routes occurs during the morning peak hour, with heavy goods vehicles accounting for about 9% of the traffic.

Figure 3.15 Daily Traffic Flows at Selected Locations

Numbers in circles refer to Location numbers in Table 3.2

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Accidents

- 3.46. Accidents tend to emerge where there are particular inadequacies such as poor visibility, conflicting movements and lack of control at junctions, lack of footways, inadequate pedestrian crossing places, narrow and winding main roads and excessive traffic volumes and speeds. On many roads, the volume of car and lorry traffic acts as a serious deterrent to other users, such as pedestrians and cyclists. These problems cannot be considered in isolation as the causes are inter-related so that even minor changes in the network can have significant repercussions. It is, therefore, important to consider the widest implications of any policy or proposal intended to benefit one section of the travelling public because of possible disadvantages to others.
- 3.47. During the three year period from 1993 to 1996 there were 26 fatal, 142 serious and 706 slight injury accidents in the District Plan area. Pedal cyclists accounted for 9% of casualties, two wheeled motor vehicles for 8% and pedestrians for 9%.

Car parks

- 3.48. The increasing population and the greater reliance on car transport for work, shopping and leisure travel combine to increase pressure in the District's car parks. Many of the villages have their own small car parks, some attached to village halls and some in village centres, as at Cranborne. The main demand for car parking is in the town centres where the volume of traffic is high and where on-street parking is limited. The main off-street public provision is in Wimborne and Ferndown, with smaller car parks at Corfe Mullen, West Moors and Verwood, and substantial parking at the Ferndown and Verwood superstores.

Alternative modes of travel

- 3.49. Within settlements which have experienced increased traffic, the need for footways and pedestrian areas has increased. Ferndown has a pedestrian shopping complex and Wimborne has areas within the town which have been paved and improved for pedestrian use. However, pedestrian movement is often hampered by motor traffic, which can make walking disagreeable or dangerous and may, to some extent, sever one part of a town or one side of a street from another. Outside the towns, both in villages and in the open countryside, separate footways are few and many roads are virtually unused by pedestrians or horseriders. Walking for recreation is better served through the network of footpaths and bridleways.
- 3.50. Hitherto, only very limited provision has been made for 'utility' cycling (cycling as a means of transport). However, there are more routes for recreational use. There is an extensive network of public rights of way open to cyclists. Many of these, however, do not link to form longer distance routes and others are severed by busy roads. Forestry Commission land is eminently suitable for walking and parts may also be used for horse riding and cycling. A recreational trailway has been established along lengths of the former Wimborne-Ringwood railway line. Further sections of the route and other cycle tracks have been created through Forestry Commission woodlands, especially near Moors Valley Country Park.

4. The Aims of the Plan

- 4.1. This Chapter sets out the aims of the Plan. The following Chapter, Chapter 5, describes the general strategy which will be followed by the Plan in seeking to achieve these aims. The subsequent chapters contain the detailed policies and the proposals which will carry this strategy into effect.
- 4.2. While it is the general practice to set out aims in Plans, it is also a frequent source of confusion and ambiguity. Aims are very general statements about the intentions of a Plan. They can easily appear to be so self-evidently worthy as to be meaningless, or to be likely to conflict with each other as soon as they are put into practice. As the East Dorset Local Plan, like others, wishes to achieve a diverse range of aims, such conflicts are inevitable. It is part of the task of the Plan to make choices between the achievement of one aim and another, where it cannot find new solutions which overcome the conflicts.
- 4.3. Aims become more precise when they are translated into objectives. A key feature of objectives is that they should be clear, and it should be certain when progress is being made towards them or away from them. Objectives are often part-way to the achievement of an aim and represent a reasonable compromise between the realistic and the ideal.
- 4.4. Some of the aims derive from national and regional planning guidance issued by the Government, and from the Structure Plan. The Regional Planning Guidance and the Structure Plan were described in Chapter 2.

Aim

Sustainability

- 4.5. The first group of aims relates to the issues of 'sustainability'. Sustainable development has been defined as "development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs" (the often-quoted 'Brundtland' definition) or "development which improves people's quality of life within the carrying capacity of the Earth's life support systems" (the definition used in the United Nations Environment Programme). Essentially, the concept of sustainability represents the understanding that planning must consider the effects of development decisions on the environment not just in the short term but in the much longer term, and in their wider, even global, impacts as well as in their local ones. Underlying this consideration, though, is the intention that although the environment and its resources may be changed by developments, its overall quality and richness should be protected. Sustainable development embraces both the protection of the environment and achieving social and economic development. The latter are covered under paragraphs 4.6 and 4.7. In terms of the environment, the development decisions of the Plan should:
- promote global sustainability
 - protect the natural resources of the area
 - protect and enhance the quality of the local environment.

Economic and Social Needs

- 4.6. The second group of aims relates to the economic and social aspects of development. They are concerned with human needs and how these are met, while at the same time the environment is protected. The development decisions of the plan should
- encourage the production of needed goods and services

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- encourage the development of local employment
- allow for the distribution of goods (this includes retailing)
- provide housing land to meet identified needs
- provide for social facilities and for recreation

Transport and Travel

4.7. The third group of aims relates to transport and travel. Freedom of movement is one of the great achievements of the present century, despite its impact on the environment. The aim of maintaining this freedom of movement is one that is most likely to conflict with the aim of conservation, however desirable it may be in itself, and is a particular area where the plan must make choices or strike a balance. 'Transport' usually refers to movement by car, lorry, van, bus, bicycle, or train. However, 'travel' has a wider application and includes journeys on foot which, although usually short, are among the most numerous and most important of all. The development decisions of the plan should

- allow for the safe and efficient movement of people and goods

Objectives

4.8. These broad aims translate into a much larger number of objectives, and the choice of these objectives begins to determine the strategy of the plan. The objectives must also recognise the realistic limits to the powers of the planning system, and the need, if it is to be effective, for the Plan to have general public support. The Agenda 21 process, in which the Council is fully involved, provides a broad-based public approach to many of the concerns covered by the Plan and similarly has sustainable development as a core objective.

4.9. The aim of promoting global sustainability (that is, limiting the impacts that extend far beyond the plan boundary) leads to the following objectives:

- a) To encourage patterns of land use and means of travel that will limit the emission of greenhouse gases by
 - limiting the need to travel
 - enabling travel by means which have the least impact on the environment
 - siting development where heat loss will be minimised;
- b) To discourage or prevent developments that will reduce the range and quality of wildlife or its habitats and to maintain or enhance biodiversity;
- c) To safeguard renewable resources and renewable energy potential.

4.10. Protecting the natural resources of the area sets the following objectives:

- d) To protect areas of the best and most versatile farmland, productive woodlands, mineral resources, underground and surface water and areas of nature conservation value and importance for biodiversity against damaging forms of development;
- e) To control the location of development to avoid conflict between potential sources of pollution and pollution-sensitive development.

4.11. The quality of the local environment should be protected by seeking through the Local Plan:

- f) To protect the 'cultural heritage' of the area including ancient monuments, archaeological sites, historic buildings or areas from damaging development;
- g) To protect and enhance attractive landscapes in terms of both their visual quality and their character;

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- h) To protect features which contribute to the character and individuality of the area or particular places within it, and to enhance the 'sense of place';
 - i) To maintain a high quality of visual design and landscaping in new developments;
 - j) To ensure living, recreational, civic and work areas are kept from noise, dust, vibration and sources of pollution, and provide safe and secure environments for their users.
- 4.12. The social and economic aims can be translated into the following objectives:
- k) To provide adequate areas and types of sites for industrial and commercial development, within the policies of the Structure Plan;
 - l) To ensure these sites are distributed so as to offer a range of jobs within easy reach of the workers living in the District;
 - m) To provide sites for warehouses for distribution;
 - n) To foster vital and attractive town centres, and local shops;
 - o) To provide adequate areas and types of sites for housing development to the levels proposed by the Structure Plan and to ensure an adequate proportion of land is provided for affordable housing (housing available over the long term to local households which are not able to meet their own housing needs through buying or renting on the open market);
 - p) To provide land for local play, for sports and for informal recreation to at least national standards;
 - q) To provide for access to the countryside from all urban areas, especially by foot and cycle;
 - r) To provide for adequate indoor sports facilities within easy reach of the main settlements;
 - s) To ensure all towns and rural parishes have adequate meeting halls or community centres.
- 4.13. The aim of allowing for the safe and efficient movement of people and goods leads to the objectives:
- t) To create a network and hierarchy of traffic routes appropriate to their different tasks;
 - u) To provide additional road capacity where this is inadequate, and alternative forms of transport are impracticable;
 - v) To provide road improvements where these are needed for safety reasons;
 - w) To divert traffic away from sensitive areas;
 - x) To provide for the effective limitation of traffic volumes and speeds where this is desirable for safety or environmental reasons;
 - y) To locate new routes where their impact on the environment and on living conditions will be minimised;
 - z) To provide a convenient, attractive, safe and continuous network of local routes for pedestrians and cyclists in towns and villages and pedestrian areas in town centres and at recreational sites;
 - aa) To ensure development is sited and designed to permit and encourage the use of public transport.
- 4.14. It is clear that several objectives, like the aims, will conflict with each other. It would also be possible make a much larger or more detailed list of objectives. However, to avoid conflict by selecting preferred objectives or to make them even more specific and precise would impinge on the choices and policies of the Local Plan strategy, which is dealt with in the next chapter.

5. The Strategy of the Plan

Strategic Guidance

- 5.1. Much of the approach which the East Dorset Local Plan follows is set by the Structure Plan, and by Government guidance in both the Regional Planning Guidance (RPG) and in national Planning Policy Guidance Notes (PPGs). The issues of sustainability, conservation, social development and economic growth are central to Regional Planning Guidance, in turn to the Structure Plan and to the Local Plan also. It is the local interpretation of these strategies and guidelines which is the particular task of the Local Plan.
- 5.2. The Structure Plan's vision for Dorset is:
- “...of a County where, compared with the present, the economy creates more wealth and provides more jobs; all the housing needs of Dorset are met; community life is fostered; safety and health are improved; and the distinctive quality and diversity of the natural and built environment is enhanced.”⁴⁹
- 5.3. It was described in Chapter 2 how the ‘guiding principle’ of the Structure Plan is that of ‘sustainable development’. This is also a key element of the government’s national policy, which was set out in the 1994 publication ‘Sustainable Development: the UK Strategy’. The concept of sustainable development embraces both development and environmental issues. It recognises the importance of social, environmental and economic factors in the quality of human life, while living within the capacity for replenishment of renewable natural resources, and while handing down undiminished to future generations not only man made wealth but also natural wealth. Development may take the form of improvements in quality as well as (or instead of) increases in quantity. Both in its own right and as a basic feature of the Structure Plan, the concept of sustainable development is also of fundamental importance to this Local Plan.

Level of Growth

- 5.4. Chapter 3 has described the extremely high environmental quality of East Dorset. About 45% of the District is an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB), and 8% is covered by Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSIs), many of which are of international importance. In the field of the built environment, its historic villages and town centres are outstandingly attractive; the District has 15 Conservation Areas and 685 ‘Listings’ of buildings (many covering more than one building). The limited size and separate identity of its main settlements, each within easy reach of open countryside, are further, highly-valued characteristics of the area. The rapid development of recent decades has created many attractive suburbs, well laid-out and landscaped, with good-quality modern housing.
- 5.5. This development has brought the opportunity to live and work in the area to many who would otherwise have been unable to do so. However it has also placed pressures on the environment which have led to damage and loss. While many housing areas have been of high quality, others have been unimaginative, laid out with little variety, using standard house types and failing to respect local building styles or foster local identity. Some new housing areas are intrusive in the landscape or have led to the loss of valued trees or important local features. The development of dispersed suburban and ‘exurban’ housing has led to increases in travel and road traffic. Housing areas, roads and hard standings have generated surface water runoff, as well as foul water, which have polluted rivers and streams. Industrial areas have created their own pollution of water and soils. In the past, areas which would now be

⁴⁹ Bournemouth, Dorset and Poole Structure Plan, February 2001, Vision for the Future, para 2.20

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seen as of great nature conservation importance have been built upon, and the increasing local population has led to the more intensive use, and often the erosion, of remaining areas of importance such as heathlands.

- 5.6. Regional Planning Guidance RPG 10, published in September 2001, considers that the principal issue is whether, in the context of sustainable development, the Bournemouth / Poole area can continue to expand at a rate commensurate with the past. The conurbation is likely to remain a popular area for retirement and this will continue to be a significant component of the housing market. There is a significant supply of land for employment, although its suitability and availability need to be reviewed.⁵⁰ It notes that:

“National and international nature and landscape designations severely limit the further release of greenfield land, and areas of flood plain are a further constraint. The past outward rate of physical expansion by the conurbation will not be able to continue into the future. Future physical development should be focused within the built up area, although a review of Green Belt boundaries, to identify opportunities for sustainable development, should be undertaken.”⁵¹

This review is expected to take place as part of the review of the Structure Plan, which will form part of the next cycle of plan-making for the area.

- 5.7. Important elements of the Structure Plan strategy are

“to provide for a reduced rate of migration-led population growth”⁵²; and

“to concentrate new built development in existing built-up areas, particularly the conurbation and other towns.”⁵³

- 5.8. Against the background of the exceptional quality of the District’s environment, the Regional Planning Guidance and the basic approach of the Structure Plan, the strategy for the District is one of very limited new growth. The Structure Plan proposes a total of about 4,400 dwellings to be built in the District in the period 1994 - 2011 (see Chapter 2). Housing demand in the area is likely to remain high, and this figure reflects the restrictions which planning policies will apply to further development.

- 5.9. The **first element of the strategy** for the District is to accommodate a level of growth, in line with that set by the Structure Plan, which will be balanced against continued policies for environmental protection. These policies and Green Belt policy will restrict growth below the level that would be likely in the absence of planning controls.

Settlement Strategy

The Urban Areas

- 5.10. In the past, much of the development in the District has been part of the outward extension of the conurbation and has contributed to an increasingly dispersed pattern of housing, employment and services, both in the form of new suburban development and in the countryside. It is the intention of both regional planning guidance and of the Structure Plan that this trend should not continue, but that future development should be focussed on the existing towns. The concentration of the limited amount of development on the main settlements is the second element of a sustainable development strategy for the District. This will assist in limiting the need to travel, in the effective and economical provision of services, and in limiting the impact of development on the countryside.

⁵⁰ Regional Planning Guidance for the South West (RPG10), Sept 2001, para 3.38.

⁵¹ Regional Planning Guidance for the South West (RPG10), Sept 2001, para 3.39.

⁵² Bournemouth, Dorset and Poole Structure Plan, February 2001, para 2.42.

⁵³ Bournemouth, Dorset and Poole Structure Plan, February 2001, para 2.39.

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5.11. However, if the proposed development were to take the form of further outward extension of these settlements, beyond the boundaries established through past plans, this would lead to housing distant from the facilities which the towns provide and to the erosion of the important open land which separates and surrounds them. This could endanger their separate identities, reduce access from residential areas to the countryside, and would press in many places upon areas of nature conservation and landscape importance.

5.12. Some of the development sites within the urban boundaries, or which round them off, are identified in specific development proposals. Verwood is the main town where substantial undeveloped housing sites are identified, and in Ferndown, West Moors and Wimborne. In essence, the proposals for the settlements are:

Alderholt: no additional greenfield housing sites are proposed although infilling is expected to continue at a low level and there is the possibility of some local needs housing on the edge of the settlement as an exception to normal policies;

Corfe Mullen: the limits of the town are set by statutorily defined Green Belt boundaries (which restrict development to the top of the plateau and protect the side slopes to the north, south and west) and by areas of nature conservation importance to the south. Although not proposed within this Plan, it is expected that the Lockyers Middle School will be redeveloped within the existing school land and provision will be made for additional playing fields north of Wimborne Road;

Ferndown and West Parley: completion of housing sites previously committed in the north of the town, within and on the edge of the built-up area and excluded from the Green Belt; also on land at Poor Common in the south extending to natural limits set by landscape features. Further land in the north and at Stapehill is excluded from the Green Belt, but will be subject to a policy protecting the sites from development. Their future status will be reviewed as part of the next review of the Local Plan. In addition a substantial industrial development is proposed at Ferndown Industrial Estate. Elsewhere the limits of the town are set by statutorily defined Green Belt boundaries, by land of high nature conservation importance to the west, north and east and the important open corridors formed by the valleys of the River Stour to the south and the Uddens Water to the north;

Verwood: development of substantial sites within the urban area, many reserved as 'Phase 2' development sites in the 1978 Review of Residential Densities, together with sites on the edge of the built-up area, bringing development to its natural boundaries. The limits of the town are set by the Green Belt which includes the Crane valley and floodplain to the south and west of the town, while development to the north and east is limited by the rising land of the Ringwood Forest plantations;

West Moors: development on 'white land' between the existing built-up area and the edge of the MoD Depot. Elsewhere the limits of the town are set by statutorily defined Green Belt boundaries which follow the valley of the Uddens Water and Mannington Brook to the south and west, the MoD Depot and West Moors forestry plantation to the north-east, and the valley of the Moors River to the east. The proposed West Moors Bypass will lead to a requirement for additional playing field land on the west to replace that sterilised by the road. Further land in the east is excluded from the Green Belt, but will be subject to a policy protecting it from development. Its future status will be reviewed as part of the next review of the Local Plan;

Wimborne: development of a particularly high quality on small sites within the town centre to restore the urban form of this compact Conservation Area. Continued small scale redevelopment and conversions will add to the resident town centre population.

No green field development is proposed at **St. Leonards and St Ives**, where the Green Belt boundaries of the urban area broadly follow the A31 to the south-east, the valley of the Moors River and important heathlands to the west, and the edge of the Ringwood Forest plantations to the north. The outlying Avon Castle Estate lies on a

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constricted tongue of land between the A338 Spur Road and the River Avon. No further expansion is proposed.

Figure 5.1 The Strategy of the Plan

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- 5.13. The density of development on the proposed sites is constrained by a number of factors. For example, many are well wooded or bounded by important mature trees. The density of the proposed development is specified where this is important to ensure that it is appropriate to the character of the site and to enable identified important features to be retained. On other sites, for example in the centre of Wimborne, densities may be substantially higher. The densities which are specified are based on the character of the individual sites while taking into account the drive towards higher densities set out in PPG 3 and represent a balance between the need

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for economy in the use of land and protection of features which are important for the quality of the urban environment.

- 5.14. Other development, particularly of housing, is expected to arise on 'windfall' sites within the urban areas. On these sites, the processes of infilling, development on garden plots and the assembly of land for redevelopment are expected to continue to provide a flow of new housing in the future as they have done in the past. It is not possible to forecast precisely which sites will come forward in this way, and therefore they are not identified individually in this Plan. They will depend on the decisions of landowners and developers.
- 5.15. Although many windfall sites are small, some, especially redevelopment sites, may be substantial in terms of the number of new dwellings, particularly where the redevelopment is for flats or for housing for the retired. In the past, the development of sites for flats has been concentrated in Wimborne and in Ferndown. While policies to protect the quality of the environment in established residential areas will be important to prevent 'town cramming' and may limit the number of new conventional houses which can be fitted into the existing pattern, redevelopment for flats and specialised housing for the retired have been shown to be possible on suitable sites without loss of urban quality, where the new buildings are sympathetically designed and well landscaped. The Plan intends that redevelopments of this kind should be supported, particularly in the central areas of Wimborne and Ferndown, and in the other urban areas close to the main public transport routes. This will have the effect of continuing to raise the number of dwellings within the urban areas.
- 5.16. The **second element in the strategy** for the District is therefore that most of the new development will take place within the limits of the existing urban areas.

Urban Environment

- 5.17. In order for most new development to be focussed upon existing towns, it will be essential for these to be increasingly attractive places to live, shop, for recreation and for work. Otherwise it is likely that the strategy will be undermined by continued pressure from people to move out of the urban areas into the countryside. Thus it is fundamental to this Plan that the quality of the urban environment should be maintained or improved.
- 5.18. The quality of new housing development is itself important. This is not simply a question of density but, among other factors, of design, neighbourliness, access to open space, the quality and extent of landscaping and traffic impact. The policies set out in Chapter 6 of the Local Plan will allow discrimination between proposals which are acceptable and those which should be rejected. They are framed to allow a wide variety of housing to be built, to meet a range of housing needs, and also make allowance for a proportion of the new housing to be 'affordable' in an area where house prices are relatively high.
- 5.19. It is also important that the towns and suburban settlements should be provided with a wide range of facilities and services, including shopping centres, open spaces and playing areas, social and cultural facilities. Access to the countryside is also a strongly felt need for urban residents, and limits to the size of the individual settlements and the protection of the open spaces around and between them, as well as the provision of country parks and recreational paths and trails are essential to secure this. The separation of the settlements by open land is also important to foster the sense of local identity.
- 5.20. The focus of development on the main settlements will itself help to reinforce their economic and social facilities, including the shopping centres, which form part of their attractiveness. It will assist in ensuring people will live where there is the opportunity for more journeys to be made on foot, by cycle or by public transport (as noted in Chapter 3, the towns in the south of the District are substantially better-served by

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public transport than other parts of East Dorset). And it will also provide the opportunity for shorter journeys to shop, to work, for sport and recreation or for social events, although the actual distance that people travel will remain a matter of private choice.

- 5.21. Finally, an important element of the attractiveness of urban areas, and one that has a major role in housing decisions, is employment. The range and quality of easily-accessible employment opportunities contribute substantially to the attraction of urban life. The economic development of the urban areas is thus also important.
- 5.22. Development may also have positive public as well as private benefits. The Local Plan proposes new development in a number of places, for example in the centre of Wimborne and in Verwood, where it will bring significant improvements to the urban environment.
- 5.23. The **third element of the strategy** is therefore the maintenance of a high quality of environment within the towns and villages of the District.

Services and Facilities

- 5.24. Provision for services and facilities is an important part of the overall strategy both for its own sake and for its part in creating a sustainable pattern of development. Both greenfield housing sites and, more gradually, the accumulation of windfall development, lead to the need for more services and facilities. In the past, public investment in these has lagged behind the private investment in new housing and employment. It is important that, where new development takes place, the infrastructure, open space and services are provided in step. This is a particular problem in Verwood, where the largest housing expansion is proposed. Here it will be necessary and reasonable for developers to contribute to the infrastructure to serve the new development. Equally it is important that, even in those settlements where greenfield development has come to an end, past shortfalls are made up and new needs are met. The plan makes proposals to achieve this, within constraints set mainly by the limits on finance.
- 5.25. The **fourth element of the strategy** is therefore to ensure that adequate services and infrastructure are provided.

Town Centres and Local Centres

- 5.26. Within the main settlements the town centres of Wimborne Minster, Ferndown and Verwood play particularly important roles. They provide shopping, services and social facilities accessible by car, on foot, and by public transport. They are, in addition, the focus of civic identity. In the terminology of PPG 6, they form the three main 'town centres' in the District, together with a fourth, smaller centre at West Moors. The shopping pattern has been outlined in Chapter 3 and the roles of the centres are briefly described below. The local urban centres are treated in order of relative size.

Ferndown is the largest centre in terms of floorspace and is the centre of the largest urban area in the District. It is more recently developed and has fewer services than Wimborne. A major edge-of-centre superstore was developed here in the 1980s, providing a substantial expansion of the shopping centre, a major new car park and social facilities including the community centre. The more recent development of an edge-of-town superstore at Tricketts Cross has been followed by the closure of one of the two main town centre stores. It is expected that there will be scope for some redevelopment and expansion within the broad limits of the existing centre, but the limited population growth is not expected to support significant further expansion.

Wimborne in particular retains much of the character and role of a country market town, serving a rural hinterland. Its historic character has long provided a strong tourist

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and recreational basis to its shopping business. It is a focus of public transport routes and has the largest amount of public car parking of any centre in the District. Redevelopment or expansion is constrained by the need to conserve the historic character. The development of an edge-of-centre superstore in the early 1980s provided an important modern facility but was followed by the closure of small specialist food stores. However, the town retains a wide range of specialist small non-food shops. Development or redevelopment in response to additional demands should be within or on the edge of the existing town centre while avoiding damage to the historic character of the town.

Verwood is unusual in that the plans of the 1970s sought the develop a new centre on a fresh site. Although a large superstore and some smaller shops were built on this new site in the 1980s, the historic village centre continued, and it is in this historic centre that the Local Plan proposes that future development should take place to provide a focus for civic identity. Extensive additional public parking is proposed together with the recovery of the 'village green' from use as a car park to form a public open space at the centre.

West Moors has a smaller town centre than either Wimborne or Ferndown, although it is rather more than a neighbourhood centre and includes some services and community buildings. Such a neighbourhood centre exists in the south-eastern part of the urban area at Pinehurst Road. The environment of the main town centre is poor with a substantial flow of through traffic along Station Road. An enhancement scheme has recently been completed and the traffic flow will be relieved by the proposed West Moors bypass. Some redevelopment for small shops has recently taken place in the centre and there is a small public car park.

Corfe Mullen has two neighbourhood centres on the Wareham Road, both composed of somewhat scattered facilities. The northern centre includes the village hall and library as well as a substantial supermarket and public parking. The southern centre also contains a supermarket. Now that the period of rapid population growth has ended, and in view of the proximity of local centres such as Wimborne and Broadstone and of out-of-centre stores such as those at Fleetsbridge and Tower Park, it is not expected that either of the neighbourhood centres at Corfe Mullen will expand significantly. However, there is scope for further development and redevelopment particularly in the south, and such further small scale consolidation is supported by this Plan.

West Parley is served principally by a neighbourhood centre at Parley Crossroads. The position of the centre on the A347 and B3078 provide it with an element of passing trade. The centre is long established and there have been no proposals for its expansion or redevelopment, other than an application in the late 1970s for a superstore on a site opposite, on land that now forms part of the Green Belt. This was refused. As the population of West Parley is expected to remain broadly static, and Ferndown town centre to the north, and Winton to the south provide substantial alternative shopping attractions, no proposals are made for expansion of the local centre.

St. Leonards and St Ives is unusual for a settlement of nearly 6,000 population in being served only by a small number of local convenience shops. The area's high car ownership and the proximity of the centres in Ringwood and Ferndown result in most of the 'spend' from the area flowing to outside centres. It is expected that this will continue, and no provision for additional shopping is proposed.

- 5.27. The maintenance and enhancement of these urban shopping centres is a fifth element of the Plan strategy. There is only one edge of town superstore in the District, and the Plan makes no proposals for the development of any further such stores. However, because the District will have only very limited housing growth in the Plan period, the population is likely to remain broadly static, with Verwood as the most significant area of growth. Neither the local shopping parades nor the town centres are likely to need to expand very greatly. The Plan defines the areas within which further development

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or redevelopment for shops and services will be encouraged, but proposals for the significant expansion of the shopping areas would be unrealistic. Alterations are not proposed to the hierarchy and roles of the centres.

- 5.28. Higher order shopping facilities are expected to continue to be provided by the main centres of the coastal towns in the case of the main urban areas in the south, and at Salisbury in the case of some of the northern parts of the District. It will be important to ensure that any increase in suburban superstores in the suburbs of the coastal towns does not undermine the prosperity and the role of the town centres or local shopping facilities in this District.
- 5.29. The **fifth element of the strategy** is to maintain and enhance the role of town centres and local shopping parades in the main settlements in serving the local population and providing a focus for civic life.

Employment

- 5.30. The informal plans of the early 1970s, the 1980 South East Dorset Structure Plan and the 1990 First Alteration to the South East Dorset Structure Plan all proposed substantial development on industrial estates in the southern and eastern parts of the District, in parallel with the extensive housing which they also proposed. While much of the housing has been completed, large areas of employment land identified in previous plans remain undeveloped. Chapter 3 has noted the large daily outflow of commuters to the coastal towns, especially from the settlements in the south of the District. It is therefore proposed that the Plan should seek to increase local employment opportunities, as well as providing for the expansion of local businesses, as a further element of its strategy. The Plan includes proposals for development of significant areas of employment land at Ferndown, and some additional land at Wimborne.
- 5.31. Care will need to be taken that the increase in local employment, while providing a better balance between the local work force and local jobs, does not lead to a need for additional housing which would conflict with Green Belt or policies for the protection of important features of the environment.
- 5.32. The **sixth element of the strategy** is thus to increase employment opportunities at a limited number of focal sites in the south and east of the District.

The Rural Settlements

- 5.33. Chapter 3 has underlined the contrast between the developed south and east of the District and the rural north and west. The approach of the Plan towards the rural settlements differs from that taken towards the urban areas.
- 5.34. The large majority of the rural settlements in the District are small, with very limited facilities or services of their own. Additional housing in these settlements would lead to an increase in the dispersed population, dependent on distant centres for many services and for most of its employment, and would conflict directly with strategic planning guidelines and with the principles of sustainable development. Development on a scale to support a significantly larger range of local services and employment would transform the character of the area, would require large investment in infrastructure, and would be damaging to the environment.
- 5.35. The past policy approach has been for the development of a limited number of larger villages - Alderholt, Cranborne, Sixpenny Handley and Sturminster Marshall. These, together with Wimborne, which retains much of its character as a country town serving the rural area, act as local centres so that no part of it is very far from a range of basic services. All except Cranborne have received substantial additional housing over the last decade. Little would now be added to these larger villages by limited further

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housing development. It would be likely to result in an increase in the populations for whom long journeys would be necessary for many or most employment, education, service or social facilities. On the other hand, further employment development and community facilities are desirable in some locations. Employment development is proposed at Sturminster Marshall, and Cranborne and might also be provided through redevelopment at Alderholt. Further social facilities are being built or are proposed at Sturminster Marshall, Sixpenny Handley and Alderholt. The strategy of the Plan is therefore to support the continued role of these larger rural settlements as service centres for their local areas, but without substantial further releases of green field sites for housing. Facilities and services in the smaller villages are important for the vitality and viability of these communities and their retention will also be supported.

- 5.36. Some infill development would be allowed both within the four larger settlements and some other named villages, including a number within the Green Belt, where this would allow their consolidation, although the policies in Chapter 6 would apply stringent controls to protect the villages' character and environment.
- 5.37. However, the Plan would also allow for the provision of affordable housing to meet local needs, as an exception to normal policy, either within or on the edges of named villages, not only in the more distant countryside but also in the outer parts of the Green Belt, away from the urban fringe.
- 5.38. New local employment opportunities will be encouraged in the rural areas through the re-use of buildings. These will be particularly suitable for smaller businesses. However, the Plan expects that the rural areas will inevitably continue to rely heavily on the main towns, which will offer a wider range and more constant supply of employment opportunities than could be provided locally. Additional, dispersed, small scale rural employment would be likely to exacerbate the diffuse pattern of cross-country car-borne commuting.
- 5.39. In both the north-west of the District and in the Green Belt, there are a number of settlements which, because of their small size or their scattered nature, cannot be classed as villages. Development in these would increase the urbanisation of the countryside and add to the dispersed population, without the justification of allowing the consolidation of an existing village. The approach of the Plan will be to treat these areas as part of the open countryside, governed by Green Belt and other countryside policies.
- 5.40. Thus the **seventh element of the Plan strategy** is, in the rural settlements: to maintain the four main villages which, together with Wimborne, form the local centres and to support local facilities elsewhere; limit new housing largely to infill in the villages; tightly restrict new housing in the countryside or among the other scattered settlements; and to allow some small scale employment development and local needs housing.

Open Countryside

- 5.41. Over a long period the District has been under intense pressure for new suburban development for housing and businesses, particularly in the south and east. There is no reason to expect that this pressure will cease in the foreseeable future. The danger of piecemeal urban development in the countryside remains substantial. It is national policy that the countryside should be protected for its own sake, as well as for the particular features of importance that lie within it. Moreover, dispersed development throughout the countryside would be deeply damaging to the objective of sustainable development, leading in particular to substantial increases in the need for travel. The strategy of the Plan, following that of the Structure Plan, is therefore to restrict new development in the countryside. In the south and east this will continue to be through the Green Belt policies. In the remainder of the rural area, much of which is AONB, other restrictive policies will apply. These policies, however, will allow for the needs of farming and forestry, and for the re-use of existing buildings.

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- 5.42. Other forms of development may also be acceptable. The Green Belt in particular offers the opportunity for recreational uses where these do not jeopardise the open character of the land. In the AONB, the overriding issue is generally that of the impact of any development on the landscape, although this must be balanced against the social and economic needs of the rural community. The protection of the countryside is also a major consideration in other parts of the area, some of which are designated as Areas of Great Landscape Value (AGLV). Throughout the countryside, the Plan proposes the protection of Sites of Special Scientific Interest and other Sites of Nature Conservation Interest (SNCIs), archaeological sites, floodplains, water source protection areas, and the best agricultural land, among other features.
- 5.43. The proposed approach of the Plan towards the countryside, and the **eighth element of the strategy**, will therefore be to provide long-term protection to individual features of major importance, and to its overall character, while allowing some limited forms of development where this is appropriate.

The Strategy and The Structure Plan Development Proposals

Housing

- 5.44. The Structure Plan requires that about 4,400 new dwellings should be provided within East Dorset between 1994 and 2011.⁵⁴
- 5.45. This figure has been identified on the basis of an assessment of demographic needs, environmental constraints and infrastructure capacity. The Structure Plan deliberately allows for a degree of flexibility in order to accommodate unforeseen fluctuations in supply and local circumstances. The flexibility range is considered by the Structure Plan Authority to be in the range of + or – 10%, i.e. provision in the plan period should fall somewhere between 3,960 and 4,840 dwellings.
- 5.46. Policy HSUP1**
The provision of about 4,400 new dwellings will be made within the District for the period 1994 to 2011.
- 5.47. The provision for meeting this requirement can be described as follows:

Completions

An assessment of housing completions is carried out by officers of Dorset County and East Dorset District Council on an annual basis. A dwelling is assessed as being completed if it is reasonably habitable i.e. walls, roof, windows and doors finished and main services provided. During the period 1st April 1994 to 31st March 2000 there were 2,174 dwellings completed in the District. This represents almost half of the Structure Plan requirement, completed in about 40% of the Plan period.

Allocated Sites

Allocated sites are those that are identified for residential development within a local plan. Some allocated sites from previous local plans now have planning permission and were being implemented, as of 31st March 2001. They are included within the figures for allocated sites even though they have now been deleted from this Local Plan, due to the commencement of works. As of 31st March 2001 there were 672 dwellings with planning permission on allocated sites, yet to be completed. Allocated sites that did not have planning permission as of 31st March 2000 are estimated to be

⁵⁴ Bournemouth, Dorset and Poole Structure Plan, February 2001, Housing Policy A, page 62.

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able to accommodate a further 409 dwellings. A list of allocated dwellings is set out within Appendix D.

It is predicted that 90% of dwellings on allocated sites will be implemented during the plan period. This means that, of the 1,081 dwellings allocated in the Local Plan there should be 973 dwellings built on allocated sites within the plan period.

Outstanding Planning Permissions on Windfall Sites

Windfall sites are those that have not been specifically allocated in the plan. As of 31st March 2000 there were 857 dwellings with planning permission that had not been completed.

The following provides a summary on where the outstanding planning permissions for new dwellings were located as of 31st March 2000.

Alderholt	19
Corfe Mullen	23
Cranborne	4
Ferndown	357
Hampreston	3
Hinton Martell	2
Holt	3
Horton	4
Sixpenny Handley	14
St Leonards and St Ives	62
Sturminster Marshall	32
West Moors	46
Wimborne & Colehill	64
Witchampton	17
Verwood	207
Total	857

It is known through past experience that not all of these planning permissions will be implemented during the plan period. Based on reliable figures for the period 1983 to 1989 it is estimated that 87% of residential planning permissions are implemented. This means that 746 dwellings with planning permission, as of 31st March 2000, are predicted to be completed in the plan period.

Future Windfall Sites

Planning permissions for windfall sites for the period 1993 to 1998 averaged 153 per annum. These can be used to project forward the likely number of windfall completions for the remaining period of the plan. It is considered that the 87% implementation rate should be applied for the six years up to 2005/2006. Following this period there will be a reducing implementation rate as less time will be available for planning permissions to be completed. Taking these factors into account it is estimated that a further 1,322 dwellings could be completed on currently unidentified windfall sites between April 2000 and the end of March 2011.

The planning policies of the plan, in particular Green Belt policy, means that the great majority of windfall development takes place within the main urban area, on previously developed land, in locations which are in close proximity to facilities, employment and public transport. Such development complies with the Government's policies and strategic policies regarding the location of development.

Housing Supply Summary

Pulling together the elements considered above, it is estimated that the Structure Plan housing requirement for the District will be provided by the following:

Structure Plan Housing Requirement	about 4,400
Supply	
Completions 1994 – 2000	2,174
Allocated housing sites with planning permission (90% implementation rate)	605
Windfall sites with planning permission (87% implementation rate)	746
Subtotal	3,525
Estimated windfall completions on sites yet to receive planning permission (87% implementation rate)	1,097
Total	4,622

The remaining allocated housing sites have an estimated total capacity of 419 dwellings (Table Appendix D). They will be released subject to Policy HSUP2.

- 5.48. The release of housing sites will be closely monitored. If it appears that there will be a shortfall in supply, the planning authority will actively seek to bring forward the development of land identified for housing development in the Plan and windfall sites which accord with the Plan's policies. If it appears that there is likely to be an over-supply, the planning authority will introduce and maintain an up-to-date scheme of phasing on non-strategic sites in the form of Supplementary Planning Guidance, and will apply similar policies to proposals for the development of 'windfall' sites.

5.49. Policy HSUP2

In phasing the release of housing sites, priority will be given to sites which re-use previously developed land and are within urban areas or village infill policy areas. Greenfield sites will be released where they are needed to ensure an adequate supply of housing sites which is not met from previously developed land.

Priority will also be given to sites according to the contribution which they will make to meeting identified needs for affordable or specialist housing, or to the provision of infrastructure.

Strategic Sites

- 5.50. Verwood is identified as a strategic housing proposal within the Structure Plan.⁵⁵ Development there forms part of a comprehensive scheme of town development and is expected to contribute to essential physical and social infrastructure needs. Housing sites in Verwood will therefore be treated as a strategic proposal and will not be subject to phasing limitations.
- 5.51. Following the Local Plan Inquiry the Council accepted that housing development was likely to significantly exceed the Structure Plan requirement. Additionally, new Government guidance sought local authorities to reduce greenfield development in favour of the use of previously developed land. This has led the Council to reconsider housing allocations made within the Deposit Local Plan. Seven housing allocations

⁵⁵ Bournemouth, Dorset and Poole Structure Plan, February 2001, para 6.34.

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have subsequently been deleted to reduce the oversupply of housing and also to prevent the use of greenfield land. Six of these sites are on the edge of urban areas, adjacent to the adopted green belt. Although the housing allocations have been deleted the sites have not been placed within the Green Belt. It is the Council's intention that the potential development of these sites will be reconsidered in the context of the sequential approach set out within PPG3, when the Local Plan is reviewed. In the meantime, the sites have been excluded from the urban area and green belt, so that they, in effect, lie within the countryside. In order to prevent their development they are also protected by the following policy.

5.52. Policy HSUP3

Planning permission for development, other than for agriculture or forestry, will not be permitted on the following sites prior to the completion of a review of the Local Plan:

Forest View Drive, Ferndown
Woodland Walk, Ferndown
Coopers Lane, Verwood
Doe's Lane (South), Verwood
Blackfield Farm, West Moors
Julian's Road, Wimborne

- 5.53. When estimating the future flow of housing completions it should be remembered that there are a number of variables that can have a significant influence, in particular relating to economic matters. In order to ensure that the supply of new dwellings will meet the Structure Plan requirement the Council, along with Dorset County Council, will carefully monitor the situation. If this shows that the requirement is unlikely to be met the Council will seek to rectify the position through a review of policy.

Employment

- 5.54. The employment land proposals in the Structure Plan are for a total of 20 hectares (49.4 acres) of development. As of the beginning of 1999 a total of 8 hectares (19.8 acres) of employment land had already been completed, leaving 12 hectares (29.7 acres) to be implemented over the remaining 12 years of the plan period. Allocations in this plan total a further 17.4 hectares (43 acres). The majority of this land is based at the Uddens and Ferndown Industrial Estates, with a small development at Verwood. It is also anticipated that further employment development could take place on sites not allocated in the plan.
- 5.55. The Structure Plan identifies a strategic employment site of 80 hectares (198 acres) at Bournemouth International Airport just outside the District of which 40 ha are expected to be developed by 2011.⁵⁶ When implemented this will provide a significant source of employment for people within East Dorset.

Transport and Travel

- 5.56. In an age of readily-available, low-cost transport, many people will choose to make longer journeys, or will travel for pleasure. This will be reflected in decisions on where to live, work, shop and meet, and these places may be, by choice, widely separated. Any change in travel habits as a result of national or local policies is likely to come about slowly, and Chapter 3 has noted that the area is already one of high car ownership and rapid traffic growth. However, the pattern of land use now being developed will endure for many years, and it is part of the strategy of the Local Plan to

⁵⁶ Bournemouth, Dorset and Poole Structure Plan, February 2001, para 4.32

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avoid adding to the necessity for long journeys, and to make travel by foot, cycle, and public transport easier so that, in the long term, people will be free to choose to travel less, or by other means than by car.

- 5.57. In the countryside and in the low density suburban areas, long distance journeys will often continue to be unavoidable, and for many of these trips car travel will remain the only practicable option. Travel by car will also continue to be the preferred choice of many people for other journeys. Goods movements will all be by road.

Road Schemes

- 5.58. Some road schemes, including the Department of Transport's A31 to Poole link road (which has now been dropped from the national programme) and the County schemes for the Spetisbury, Charlton Marshall and Sturminster Marshall Bypass and the West Moors Bypass are proposed at the strategic planning level. The principle of these schemes is neither questioned nor justified in the Local Plan, although the alignment for the Department of Transport scheme is shown on the Proposals Map and the alignments of the West Moors Bypass and the Spetisbury, Charlton Marshall and Sturminster Marshall Bypass are proposals of this Plan.
- 5.59. More local transport matters fall to the Local Plan to consider. The approach adopted is to propose new roads or road improvements which are necessary to reduce accidents, overcome environmental problems or, in town centres and residential areas, where the safety and freedom of movement of pedestrians, cyclists and others needs to be increased.
- 5.60. These road proposals may also have the effect of easing traffic flow as a necessary part of diverting traffic away from other roads and areas. New roads are proposed in Verwood in particular, and on the route southwards from Verwood past Three Legged Cross and West Moors, partly to accommodate the traffic likely to arise from the new development and to maintain safety and adequate environmental conditions both in the town and on the routes leading from it.

Alternative Means of Travel

- 5.61. The Plan seeks to improve pedestrian and cycle routes for more local trips, both within towns and in the countryside. An extensive network of cycle routes is proposed. In many cases this may have less effect in drawing people away from car use than in restoring the freedom of movement for those who rely on walking or cycling, but who have come to regard the roads as too dangerous to use. All major new housing and employment developments, and any town centre improvements, will be designed to take account of the needs of public transport.

Traffic Calming

- 5.62. Throughout the network, traffic calming and other traffic management measures will be important, particularly to increase road safety, but although the Plan gives some indications of areas where these may occur, they are largely matters which are too detailed for inclusion in a Local Plan.
- 5.63. Thus the **final element in the strategy** is not to reject out-of-hand any further highway improvements, but to introduce these where they will have clear environmental and safety benefits, while improving the provision for travel by other means. Transport policies are included in Chapter 6, which follows, and the main transport proposals are made in Chapter 7.

Conclusion

5.64. The Strategy of the Local Plan is therefore, in summary.

- to accommodate the level of growth proposed by the Structure Plan, permitting policies for environmental protection to continue
- to direct most new development within the limits of the existing urban areas
- to maintain a high quality of environment within the towns and villages of the District to ensure urban living remains attractive
- to ensure that adequate services and infrastructure are provided
- to maintain and enhance the role of town centres and local shopping parades in the main settlements in serving the local population and providing a focus for civic life
- to increase employment opportunities at a limited number of focal sites in the south and east of the District
- in the rural area to maintain the four main villages which, together with Wimborne, form the local centres and support local facilities elsewhere; limit new housing largely to infill in the villages; to restrict tightly new housing in the open countryside or among the other scattered settlements; and to allow small scale employment development and local needs housing
- within the open countryside to provide long-term protection to individual features of importance and to the overall character of the area, while allowing some limited forms of development where these are appropriate
- to introduce further highway improvements where they will have clear environmental and safety benefits, while improving the provision for travel by other means.