

Core Strategy Area Profile

Options for Consideration
Consultation
4th October – 24th December 2010

West Moors



Prepared by Christchurch Borough Council and
East Dorset District Council as part of the Local Development
Framework

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1 Area Overview

1.1 Area Overview (Baseline data)

1.2 West Moors lies immediately to the north of Ferndown to the south east of the district. It is bounded by the open countryside of Holt Heath to the west, the A31 Ferndown bypass to the south, and Uddens Water to the east.

1.3 West Moors is a modern settlement, containing few houses built before the beginning of the twentieth century.

1.4 The settlement has a number of housing areas of particular character and quality designated a Special Character Areas. It is surrounded by the Green Belt, the inner boundary of which was first defined in 1989, which has restricted outward growth in the last few years.

1.5 The population contains a relatively high proportion of elderly people. However, there are also a significant number of children in the remainder of the population.

1.6 The main shopping area is situated along Station Road (B3072), with a range of local independent shops and two convenience stores. Station Road is the main through route through the settlement taking through traffic to Verwood in the north and Ferndown to the south. There is another secondary parade of shops in the south east at Pinehurst Road, close to the junction with the A31.

1.7 Many community facilities are located along Station Road, including the library, village hall and a first school. There are 2 first schools and a middle school in West Moors, and Fryers Playing Field.

1.8 To the north of West Moors is a small industrial area at Gundrymoor (KingfisherPark) which provides some employment in the immediate locality. To the north east is a MoD major defence facility, the West Moors Petroleum Depot, much of which lies amongst heathland nationally designated as a SSSI as well as internationally as SPA, SAC and Ramsar. However, in general, West Moors is a commuter settlement, with a daily outflow of workers to neighbouring settlements and towns.

2 Baseline Data

2.1 The critical Baseline data used is from the 2001 Census of the 2007 mid-year estimates:

2.2 Sources used:

- 2001 West Moors Town Profile
- West Moors Census Town Profile (2005)
- Dorset Survey of Housing Need and Demand – East Dorset Report – Fordhams Research (June 2008)
- Employment Land Review (2007)
- Economy and Labour Market Profiles (East Dorset) (Summer 2009)

Parish	West Moors	East Dorset
Population growth	1,160	51,500
1921	1,671	68,200
1931	2,947	78,700
1951	2,947 (boundary change)	83,800
1961	5,400	

1971	6,570	
1981	6,720	
1991	7,200	
2001		
Parish Population estimated mid year 2008	7,360	85,900
Population Age Structure % (2001 Census)		
0 -15 years	13.9%	17.1%
15 – 59 years	44.4%	51.3%
Aged 60 - 74	22.4%	18.9%
75 years +	19.2%	12.7%
No car/van	14.6%	11.6%
Highly skilled	25.8%	43.4%
Low skills	57.8%	15.2%
Household Characteristics (%)		
Number of all households	3,262	35,668
Pensioner households	45.4%	35.8%
% owner occupied	84.4%	84.3%
% Housing Association	9.0%	8.1%

Table 2.1

2.3 West Moors saw significant growth during the latter half of the twentieth century, with the population more than doubling since 1951 to nearly 7,500 people. With the introduction of the green belt in 1989, and the recognition of the intrinsic value of the heathlands around the settlement, growth has slowed down considerably. The good quality housing stock in a relatively spacious suburban setting has encouraged the well off to settle in West Moors, particularly the retired. With 34.7% of residents over the age of 65, the ageing demographics are a significant feature of the settlement, higher than the District average at 25.4%. West Moors lies within the top 50% of the Least Deprived areas in the County, and deprivation is therefore not an issue within the village.

2.4 A significant number of residents do not drive (14.6%), which is higher than the average for East Dorset at 11.6%, reflecting the profile of the older residents.

3 Strategic Issues

3.1 Strategic Issues

3.2 Demographics

3.3 The large elderly population is likely to continue to grow, which will have implications for the provision of services for the elderly and their longer term care. The impact of this demographic will be a continuing low birth rate, and a higher demand for facilities for the elderly such as shops and medical services.

3.4 Housing

3.5 The low numbers of new houses being built in the parish except largely at the higher end of the market for small scale replacement 2 for 1 dwellings or luxury flats, will continue to restrict access into the area for young families in need of cheaper affordable housing. There are no large scale housing development schemes planned for West Moors.

3.6 Blackfield Farm

3.7 This site to the west east of West Moors was safeguarded for potential future housing development until the completion of a review of the 2001 Local Plan. The site is not within the Green Belt nor the urban area, but it is within 400m of protected heathland. The Core Strategy proposes to include this site within the urban area, not the Green Belt, as there is the potential for the site to be developed for a use compatible with its location within close proximity to nearby protected heathland.

3.8 Traffic

3.9 The main road through West Moors is the B3072, which carries much traffic northwards to Three Legged Cross and Verwood and southwards to the A31 and Ferndown. As the central spine to the village with the local shops and facilities located along it, there is a conflict between pedestrians and the traffic.

3.10 Petroleum Depot

3.11 The Petroleum Depot lies to the north of the village. It is a major defence facility with underground storage tanks, associated fire and rescue centre and military housing attached to the site. There are no current plans for this facility to be relocated, and as the site lies within protected heathland, it has limited development opportunity.

4 Planning Context

4.1 The Planning Policy Context is set out below.

4.2 Green Belt

4.3 The built up residential area of West Moors is classed as urban area. The remainder of the settlement is protected by the Green Belt. New development is therefore constrained to within the built up area.

4.4 Natural Environment

4.5 West Moors is closely boarded by major areas of nature conservation importance. Holt Heath Nature Reserve to the north west is one of the largest remaining heathlands in Dorset, and the heathlands of the Petroleum Depot cover a significant area and are largely undisturbed due to their secure location.

4.6 These lands are designated as Sites of Special Scientific Interest, as SPAs under the Birds Directive, as SACs under the Habitats Directive. Holt Heath is also recognised as a Ramsar site for its wetlands. The Moors River to the east of West Moors is also a SSSI and of great nature conservation importance.

4.7 The western and southern edges of the built up area are constrained by the importance landscape features of the valleys of the Mannington Brook and Uddens Water. Hatchards Copse to the west of the settlement and the meadowland on the east bank of the Mannington Brook are a Local Nature Reserve.

4.8 Flood Risk

4.9 The Mannington Brook and Uddens Water are at a high risk of flooding to the west of the settlement. Small parts of the urban area at Riverside Road, Pennington Close and PinehurstPark mobile home site are intersected by floods zones 2 and 3, putting them at risk of a flood frequency of 1 in 1,000 years and 1 in 100 years respectively.

4.10 Built Environment / Design and Landscape

4.11 West Moors is largely modern, containing few houses built before 1900. There are no areas worthy of Conservation Area status, although three areas have been recognised as Special Character Areas.

4.12 Glenwood Road / Moorlands Road is a mature housing area of mostly pre First World War family housing placed in large sylvan plots. Mostly two storey villas, they have consistency in their scale and proportions facing established straight streets. Mature trees dominate the road with high boundary hedges which conceal the houses behind. Moorside Road has substantially larger dwellings and plots, a number of which are in the Arts and Crafts Style.

4.13 Riverside Road is very different. It is a single street comprising 1950's bungalows set in large plots with almost continuous frontage hedges. The road surface is gravelled with grass verges, giving a distinctive soft informal character to the road. The houses themselves though are not of architectural merit.

4.14 Woodside Road / The Avenue is a 19th Century housing area planned on a regular street pattern. The late Victorian and Edwardian two storey villas sit in generous plots (by modern standards) and remain an intrinsic characteristic of the area. The straight streets are softened by mature trees and high frontage hedges to the street.

4.15 Future housing patterns will need to respect the layout and character of the Special Character Areas, but note that this does not preclude flats. Recent years have seen a growing number of redevelopment opportunities on sites with large houses, which have been replaced by flats. The areas located within 400m of internationally recognised Heathlands will continue to be safeguarded from housing development resulting in a net gain of units.

5 Existing Community Facilities

5.1 Existing Community Facilities

5.2 Retail Provision

5.3 The main shopping area is linear and is concentrated along Station Road, with a reasonable range of shops and services located along this busy main road. There are 44 units offering a high number of service uses, but a below average number of comparison units (non-food). The village has a building society, but lacks a bank. Cash points are available outside both Tesco Express and the Co-op, the latter also providing the post office for the village.

5.4 A secondary parade of shops is located to the far east of the settlement in Pinehurst Road. These provide a useful number of shops for local residents, and include a newsagent, bakery, take away and hairdressers.

5.5 Sport and Recreation

5.6 West Moors has a large recreation ground with a pavilion at Fryer Playing Field to the north west of the settlement. There are playing pitches for football and cricket, a skate park, BMX track and bowling green. There are children's play areas at Fryer Field and Shaftsbury Road. A hard surfaced all weather play area is located behind the Memorial Hall, and is marked out for tennis courts, five-a-side football and netball - however the surface is poor.

5.7 The West Moors Plantation is a large popular area of publicly accessible open space with the route of the Castleman Trailway running through it. It offers footpaths, bridle and cycle trails, and provides safe routes and links to St Leonards (and Moors Valley) in the east and Colehill to the west.

5.8 There is informal open space at Canterbury Close, but the village lacks formal open space in the south and west, and provision for allotments, both of which were identified as lacking in the PPG17 study. Forestry Commission coniferous land has been allocated in the Local Plan for 4 hectares (10 acres) of open space at Oakhurst Road, but this has not yet been implemented.

5.9 Green Infrastructure

5.10 The strategic Castleman Trailway route passes through West Moors from the south east in a westerly direction. Formerly the route of the old Dorset and Hampshire railway line, this route is now a popular recreational cycle and walking trail. Although the route is not continuous due to historic disposal of the former railway land, it is signed through West Moors, and has the potential to provide an important link in the overall green infrastructure network for south east Dorset. Just west of West Moors, the trail splits and leads in the south towards Ferndown, past the Police divisional offices, under the A31 underpass, and has the potential to link to Ferndown Industrial estate and the town centre. The other line of the trail heads west towards Colehill.

5.11 The Castleman Trailway heads to the west through West Moors Plantation, where there are a series of rides and recreational paths laid out in the woodland, and continues to St Leonards and Moors Valley Country Park.

5.12 Health

5.13 West Moors Group Practice doctor's surgery is located in Station Road and there is a dental practise in Moorlands Road. The closest hospital is St Leonards Community Hospital at St Leonards and St Ives, although for more general health needs, the nearest hospital is in Bournemouth.

5.14 Education

5.15 There are two first schools in West Moors, St Mary's and Oakhurst Community First School, and one middle school – West Moors Middle School. The school roll has fallen dramatically in West Moors in recent years with Oakhurst First School reducing its intake from 50 to 30, and West Moors Middle School has dropped from 5 forms (150) to 2.5 (75 children) – so is running at half capacity. The nearest upper school at Ferndown has also reduced intake from an admission figure of 340 to 260 annually. The high number of elderly residents will continue to encourage this trend.

5.16 General Community Facilities

5.17 There are a good range of facilities for the village centred on Station Road. These include the Library, Memorial Hall, shops and public toilets. There are churches of 4 denominations in the village, and a number of other halls attached to the churches, schools and scout hut for community use.

5.18 Pubs and Restaurants

5.19 There are two pubs – the Tap and Railway and the Elephant and Castle which are both located in Station Road.

5.20 Community Strategy Issues

5.21 A Parish Plan was published in 2007 which identified a number of actions in West Moors to pursue. Those noted below are relevant to the Core Strategy:

5.22 Economy and Services

- Wider range of retailing and a bank required
- Better public toilets and an NHS dentist.

5.23 Housing

- More affordable housing
- Fewer flats
- More Special Character Areas

5.24 Transport and Highways

- Station Road /Pinehurst Road junction improvements
- Improved bus services
- More cycleways
- Building of the bypass

5.25 Environment

- Produce village map to show open spaces
- Join Riverside Walk up with Fryer Field
- Better signage for the Castleman Trailway
- Better use of the open space beside Woolslope development

5.26 Leisure/Community Facilities

- Improve children’s playgrounds
- Open up Canterbury Close playing field (Middle School)
- Community drop-in centre
- Toilets at Fryer Field / Skate Park
- Better indoor sports facilities
- Establish a Youth Drop-in centre

6 Housing

6.1 Housing

6.2 The 2001 Census records 3,262 households in West Moors.

6.3 The table below shows the breakdown of **housing tenures** in West Moors.(source Dorset Survey of Housing Need and Demand - East Dorset report - Fordhams Research 2008)

6.4 The majority of households are owner occupied (without a mortgage) suggesting a high number of comfortably off retired residents. This is higher than the East Dorset average of 48.8%. The provision of social housing at 7.1% in the settlement is just lower than the District average of 8.3%, although still far short of local need.

Tenure of Housing	West Moors		East Dorset	
	No.	%	No.	%

Owner Occupied (no mortgage)	2,056	58.7%	18,344	48.8%
Owner occupied (with mortgage)	1,074	30.7%	13,504	35.9%
Social Rented	248	7.1%	3,135	8.3%
Private Rented	123	3.5%	2,617	7.0%
Total	3,501	100.0%	37,600	100.0%

Table 6.1

6.5 Housing Densities and Types

6.6 The housing at West Moors is largely modern, post war, and typified by suburban bungalows in mature roads and estates in good sized plots. There are also a number of character properties within the Special Character Areas. Overall, the housing is built at a low density, although more recent developments have seen the introduction of flats, particularly along Station Road, to replace dwellings in large plots.

6.7 Dwelling Type

6.8 The table below shows the type of housing in West Moors:

Type of Housing	West Moors		East Dorset	
	No.	%	No.	%
Detached House	721	20.6%	11,603	30.9%
Semi Detached House	197	5.6%	4,325	11.5%
Terraced House	128	3.7%	3,424	9.1%
Detached Bungalow	1,605	45.8%	12,600	33.5%
Semi or terraced bungalow	524	15.0%	1,936	5.1%
Flat	326	9.3%	3,712	9.9%
Total	3,501	100.0%	37,600	100.0%

Table 6.2

6.9 This table demonstrates the large number of detached bungalows in West Moors at 45.8%, significantly above the East Dorset average of 33.5%. However, it shows that there are a higher than average number of smaller properties – semi or terraced – at 9.3%, and the number of flats is broadly similar to the District average at 9.3%.

6.10 Household Type

6.11 The following table provides data on the type of households in West Moors.

Type of Household	West Moors		East Dorset	
	No.	%	No.	%
Single Pensioners	778	22.2%	6,180	16.4%
2 or more pensioners	910	26.0%	7,783	20.7%
Single non-pensioners	207	5.9%	3,229	8.6%
2 or more adults – no children	1,219	34.8%	13,083	34.8%
Lone parent	34	1.0%	728	1.9%
2 adults + 1 child	134	3.8%	2,879	7.7%
2+ adults and 2+ children	219	6.3%	3,719	9.9%
Total	3,501	100.0%	37,600	100.0%

Table 6.3

6.12 The table shows clearly the low numbers of households with children in West Moors at just 11.1% of the total, and the correspondingly high number of adult only households. In particular, 48.3% are pensioner households, compared to 37.1% on average in East Dorset.

6.13 Household Size

6.14 In West Moors, the average household size is 2.36 persons.

6.15 Overcrowding / Under-occupation

6.16 The definition of overcrowding is obtained from the bedroom standard used by the General Household Survey. The bedroom standard is calculated on the age, sex and relationships of those inhabiting the dwelling. An under-occupied dwelling is one in which the household exceeds the bedroom standard by two or more bedrooms, ie. A four bedroom dwelling occupied by a single person or a married couple would be considered to be under-occupied.

6.17 Whilst over crowding is relatively uncommon in East Dorset, the incidence of under-occupation is much higher. With such a high number of adult only households in spacious accommodation, the table below indicates the breakdown for this information in West Moors.

Type of Accommodation	West Moors		East Dorset	
	No.	%	No.	%
Over crowded	16	0.4%	387	1.0%
Ok	2,063	58.9%	19,406	51.6%
Under-occupied	1,422	40.6%	17,808	47.4%

Total	3,501	100.0%	37,600	100.0%
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Table 6.4

6.18 From this data, it can be seen that over 40% of homes in West Moors are under-occupied, and very few households, just 16 are considered to be over crowded.

6.19 Standards of Accommodation

6.20 In terms of standards of accommodation, West Moors has relatively low density housing stock, which is in good general condition. It is broken down into 4 areas for the Super Output Areas rankings in the county. West Moors East is ranked 123, West Moors Pinehurst is ranked 157, West Moors Glenmoor is ranked 210, and West Moors North is ranked 220 out of the 247 Super Output Areas - the highest rank being 247. These figures suggest that West Moors generally does not suffer high levels of deprivation, but that more exist in West Moors East, perhaps due to housing need or overcrowding.

6.21 Households in Unsuitable Housing

6.22 Housing can be unsuitable because of its size, type, location, condition or cost.

6.23 The table below illustrates the level of households in unsuitable housing in West Moors. It can be seen that there are very few households, just 3.3% in unsuitable housing.

Type	West Moors		East Dorset	
	No.	%	No.	%
In unsuitable housing	115	3.3%	1,552	4.1%
Not in unsuitable housing	3,386	96.7%	36,048	95.9%
Total	3,501	100.0%	37,600	100.0%

Table 6.5

6.24 Housing Need

6.25 Housing Need is defined as the number of households who lack their own housing or live in unsuitable housing, or who cannot afford to meet their needs in the market.

6.26 The following table illustrates the very low level of housing need in West Moors.

Type of Need	West Moors		East Dorset	
	No.	%	No.	%
In need	29	0.8%	711	1.9%
Not in need	3,471	99.2%	36,889	98.1%
Total	3,501	100.0%	37,600	100.0%

Table 6.6

6.27 House Prices

6.28 The table below sets out most recent figures for house prices in the West Moors area in relation to the rest of Dorset. East Dorset regularly records the highest average property prices in the County.

6.29 Land Registry average prices and sales (4th quarter 2006)

Dwelling Type	Dorset		East Dorset	
	Average Price	% of sales	Average price	% of sales
Detached	£332,595	36.4	£339,756	60.2
Semi-detached	£212,888	17.4	£226,002	13.1
Terraced	£190,365	18.2	£192,225	13.0
Flat/maisonette	£175,772	27.9	£183,198	13.7
All dwellings	£242,037	100.0	£284,263	100.0

Table 6.7

6.30 Entry-level market costs in East Dorset (to buy)

Property size	Ferndown	Wimborne Minster	Verwood	Corfe Mullen	Average
1 bedroom	-	-	-	-	£142,000
2 bedrooms	£204,000	£176,000	£171,000	£171,000	£190,000
3 bedrooms	£256,000	£242,000	£237,000	£214,000	£243,000
4 bedrooms	£342,000	£313,000	£285,000	£304,000	£318,000

Table 6.8

6.31 (Survey of estate and letting agents 2006)

6.32 Entry-level market costs in East Dorset (to rent)

Property size	Ferndown	Wimborne Minster	Verwood	Corfe Mullen	Average
1 bedroom	-	-	-	-	£133
2 bedrooms	£157	£147	£156	-	£153
3 bedrooms	£198	£190	-	£196	£196
4 bedrooms	-	-	-	-	£254

Table 6.9

6.33 (Survey of estate and letting agents 2006)

6.34 House prices, like the rest of East Dorset are high relative to income in West Moors, with many people of high income retiring to or choosing to live in West Moors. This has raised property prices, and has led to a high affordability gap.

6.35 Special needs & Older Persons Households

6.36 Households with Special Needs are those where improvements are required to accommodation and services to allow those residents to remain in their homes. With an increasingly ageing population in West Moors, there will be a higher demand for special needs accommodation and retirement flats for the elderly with support services. These will need to be provided by the private sector and housing associations.

Type	West Moors		East Dorset	
	No.	%	No.	%
Special needs	789	22.5	6,975	18.6
Non-special needs	2,711	77.5	30,625	81.4
Total	3,501	100.0	37,600	100.0

Table 6.10

6.37 Strategic Issues – Housing Potential

6.38 The SHLAA recommends the following number of dwellings could be built in West Moors over the plan period.

Location	Number of sites	Number of developable units within 1 – 5 years	Number of developable units within 6 – 15 years	Number of developable units on Green Belt land
West Moors	30	25	5	225

Table 6.11

7 Employment

7.1 Employment

7.2 There are 240 firms and 1,400 employees in West Moors. There is no principal employment area, although key sites are the MOD Petroleum Depot to the north of the Parish, Gundrymoor and the edge of Woolsbridge Industrial Estate to the east.

7.3 The 2001 Census records a very low rate of unemployment of 2.7% for West Moors, slightly higher than the East Dorset average, but lower than the county average of 3.1%.

7.4 Over 30% of residents do not have qualifications, which is higher than the County average, however, over 42% are employed in highly skilled occupations. Over 84% of residents are employed in the service sector.

8 Transport

8.1 Transport

8.2 The B3072 runs through the centre of West Moors linking Verwood to Ferndown. It is a principal north south route through the District, but creates congestion in West Moors. Traffic calming measures and pedestrian crossing have been provided at key points in Station Road in recent years, and improvements to the Pinehurst Road/Station Road junction have also taken place.

8.3 A bypass was proposed some years ago and is indicated on the East Dorset Local Plan 2001 Proposal Maps. However, the developer contributions which were collected from development in Verwood in the 1990's towards this scheme were not enough to deliver the bypass. No other funding is available as the scheme does not meet the objectives of the Local Transport Plan. Investigation is currently taking place on the introduction of walking, cycling and public transport improvements which will enable the developer contributions to be spent prior to the deadline of early 2011. As a result the West Moors bypass is no longer being progressed.

8.4 Car ownership

8.5 Car ownership is lower than average for East Dorset at 85.4% - East Dorset has on average the high level of 88.4% of households owning a car. However, rates are high due to the affluence of the residents.

8.6 The following buses operate in West Moors providing a reasonable bus service for the settlement.

Bus Service	Route	Frequency
V1	Verwood / Poole	Tuesday / Fridays
27	Longham / Ringwood	Wednesdays
29	Bournemouth / West Moors via Moordown / Parley, Ferndown and Ferndown Industrial Estate	Hourly - Monday – Saturdays (less frequent to Ferndown Industrial Estate)
36	Bournemouth / Verwood	Hourly - Monday - Saturdays
37	Poole / Verwood	Hourly - Monday - Saturdays
302	Blandford / Colehill / Salisbury	Tuesday / Saturday
324	Cranborne / Alderholt / Bournemouth / Christchurch	Mondays

Table 8.1

8.7 A voluntary car scheme also operates, West Moors Neighbourcare, which offers transport to the hospital or for appointments to senior citizens for a donation.

9 Core Strategic Messages

9.1 Core Strategic Messages

9.2 Housing

9.3 House prices are very high relative to income. There are few housing association properties in West Moors (just 7.1%), and demand will always outstrip supply.

9.4 There is unlikely to be large scale new housing in the forthcoming plan period, as there are no strategic allocations in West Moors, and the area has many constraints. There may be small infill sites however, providing limited opportunities, so new housing will need to be of a high design standard, respecting local densities and layouts where necessary, and the Special Character Areas of Woodside Road / The Avenue, Glenwood Road / Moorlands Road and Riverside Road.

9.5 Demographics

9.6 The increasingly ageing population in West Moors will mean that social services and service providers will need to plan for the particular needs of this community, whether this be care homes, warden assisted housing or housing association bungalows. The flip side is that there will be fewer young people in the settlement, as evidenced in the school places surplus, which will mean fewer adults of working age in the community.

9.7 Community Facilities

9.8 The Parish Plan highlighted the lack of some services in West Moors, such as a bank or a better mix of retailers. The lack of allotments and open space for residents in the east of the settlement, and children's play space was highlighted in both the Parish Plan and the PPG17 survey.

9.9 Flood Risk

Any future development taking place on sites within the identified flood zones at Riverside Road, Pennington Close and Pinehurst Park mobile home site must ensure they are flood compliant and follow the sequential and exceptions tests as set out in national guidance. Emergency procedures in times of flood may need work to develop by the East Dorset drainage engineers and the Environment Agency
