

Core Strategy

01 Vision and Strategic Objectives Background Paper

Pre-Submission Consultation
2nd April – 25th June 2012



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East Dorset District Council

April 2012

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1 Introduction

1.1 This background paper is one of a number of papers produced as part of the Christchurch and East Dorset Local Development Framework (LDF) to inform the Pre – Submission Core Strategy. This particular paper sets out the refinement of policy options for the Core Strategy Vision and Objectives chapter following consultation undertaken between October 2010 – Jan 2011 on the Core Strategy ‘Options for Consideration’ document. Specifically, the Vision and Objectives chapter sets out the Preferred Vision which underpins the detailed Core Strategy policies, together with a number of high level Objectives on key elements of the strategy.

1.2 Preparation of the Pre - Submission Core Strategy Vision and Objectives chapter has involved consideration of the following:

- National and local policy;
- Core Strategy ‘Options for Consideration’ consultation and ongoing engagement;
- Sustainability Appraisal, Habitats Regulations Assessment, Health Impact Assessment and Equalities Impact Assessment;
- The Local Development Framework Evidence Base;
- Infrastructure delivery and viability.

1.3 This background paper also identifies, where appropriate, strategic infrastructure requirements to support the policy options within the Vision and Objectives chapter which feeds into the wider Core Strategy infrastructure delivery plan and preparation of the Community Infrastructure Levy Charging Schedule.

1.4 This paper should be read in conjunction with the other, more detailed key issue papers prepared in refining Core Strategy options from initial issues and options consultation undertaken in March 2008 to the ‘Options for Consideration’ consultation undertaken from October 2010 – January 2011.

2 Formation of Pre Submission Options

2.1 This section provides a critical assessment of the options put forward for consultation in the Vision and Objectives chapter of the 'Options for Consideration' Core Strategy and provides recommendations for the policy approach to be adopted in the Pre – Submission Core Strategy. The assessment process examines the consultation response received to the 'Options for Consideration' document and key issues arising from this engagement process. The formation of Pre – Submission policy also considers any recent changes in national policy and updates to the evidence base which supplements the policy and evidence review undertaken within the key issue papers listed in the introduction. The assessment below also takes into account conclusions of the sustainability appraisal, habitats regulations assessment, health impact assessment and equalities impact assessment undertaken for the 'Options for Consideration' Core Strategy. A summary of the proposed Pre Submission Vision and Objectives is set out at the end of this paper.

Issue and Options Identified in 'Options for Consideration' Core Strategy:

2.2 The Preferred Core Strategy Vision set out in the Options consultation document was as follows:

Preferred Core Strategy Vision

The natural environment of Christchurch and East Dorset and its historic and thriving towns and villages are, and will, continue to be the most important assets for the area. However this environment will be used to sustain the growth of the local economy, and the welfare of its local communities, rather than being used as a reason to turn our back on growth which can be achieved sustainably.

The Dorset Heathlands, the Cranborne Chase and West Wiltshire Downs Area Of Outstanding Natural Beauty, Christchurch Harbour and its beaches will be protected and enhanced to ensure that recreation and commercial activity sustains these areas.

The area will adapt to the emerging demands of climate change through clear strategies to reduce risk of flooding, and through encouraging high standards of building design and construction.

The housing needs of the area will be addressed, with housing delivered of a type and tenure which meets the aspirations of those wishing to buy or rent. An element of this housing will be in the form of new, well planned, sustainable residential areas in both Christchurch and East Dorset. These will be attractive new areas, including high quality, sustainable homes, areas of open space, new community facilities, and improved transport links to the surrounding area.

Housing will also continue to be met from redevelopment within the existing towns, but developments will now better reflect the character and type of housing found in each local area, and will make appropriate contributions to infrastructure. Almost all new housing development will contribute to the provision of affordable housing, creating a step change in delivery of affordable dwellings and a significant reduction in waiting lists.

The character of the area will also be protected through retention of the Green Belt in all areas except those needed to secure well planned and sustainable housing and employment growth as part of the Core Strategy.

Historic towns such as Christchurch and Wimborne will be vibrant centres of commercial and cultural activity, with niche shopping, and varied attractions and facilities for residents and visitors alike. Other key local centres in Ferndown, Verwood, West Moors and Highcliffe will support shops and services for their local communities, with villages and smaller neighbourhood centres providing basic services. New ways of delivering services and facilities in rural areas will be developed.

The economy of the area will grow, both by sustaining its traditional sectors such as tourism, but also by creating a mixed economy with emphasis on growth in new knowledge based sectors, especially the green knowledge economy. Economic growth will be sustained by the creation of major high quality employment sites in East Dorset and at Bournemouth Airport, and by the protection of other well located sites for key employment uses. These will have an important role in sustaining the economy of South East Dorset.

The area will be easier to get around, not just for those who have a car, but for those who wish to use public transport, to walk or to cycle. In Christchurch, development will be focused on the existing public transport corridors on the A35 and A337 and better links will be made to Christchurch and Hinton Admiral stations, with the urban extension also linked to the transport network. Christchurch Borough Council will continue to press for the development of a Christchurch Bypass as a long term solution to the town's traffic problems.

The Airport will grow sustainably into a significant regional transport hub, providing scheduled and charter flights to a wide range of business and tourist destinations. Both the airport and its business parks will be linked to the surrounding conurbation by public transport services.

In East Dorset, transport corridors will be developed to help reduce the need to travel and promote a wider choice of transport, including walking, cycling and public transport. These corridors will include linking the towns and villages of Ferndown, West Moors, Three Legged Cross and Verwood, and improving links to Wimborne from Poole. Improvements to Canford Bottom Roundabout and dualling the A31 from Ferndown to Merley will reduce congestion and improve connectivity with the rest of Dorset and Hampshire.

And perhaps most important of all, our communities will thrive. There will be targeted redevelopment of local areas of deprivation in the Somerford, Leigh Park and Heatherlands Estates. Support will be given to the community groups and organisations to develop volunteering, and to obtain premises from which to deliver services. In particular, a new Druitt Hall community facility will be developed in Christchurch in parallel with remodelled community gardens, which will act as a focus for community activity in the town.

2.3 The Preferred Core Strategy Vision was supported by a series of 6 Strategic Objectives, which cross referred to detailed options put forward in the consultation document:

Preferred Option Objective 1

To manage and safeguard the environment of Christchurch and East Dorset.

The **Green Belt** will be retained and protected, except for strategic release of land to provide new housing, and for employment development in East Dorset and at Bournemouth Airport. Impact **on designated sites** will be avoided, and residential development will contribute to mitigation of development on Heathland habitats. New **greenspace** will be provided as part of major housing proposals. Important **natural features** such as Christchurch Harbour and the Cranborne Chase Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty will be protected and enhanced.

Key options:

- Clearly defined and justified Green Belt release, with strong protection elsewhere.
- Criteria based option to protect designated sites.
- Suitable Alternative Natural Greenspace to be provided in step with new housing development.
- Review the Area of Great Landscape Value boundaries in East Dorset.
- Consider development of rural design policies.

Preferred Option Objective 2

To maintain the character of the towns and villages, and to create vibrant local centres.

A clear **hierarchy of centres** will be developed, with a clear strategy for the major centres. Town and district centre boundaries will be created in Christchurch, Wimborne, Ferndown, Verwood and West Moors to help create a vibrant centre with a range of services and facilities. **Locally listed buildings** will now form part of the heritage protection strategy, and a local list will be created in East Dorset, and the Christchurch Local List updated. The Christchurch Borough Character Assessment and design standards in East Dorset will be used to guide design of new development.

Article 4(1) and 4(2) Directions will be considered to control small scale works which might damage the character of **Conservation Areas**. **Open space** will be provided alongside new residential development. **Areas of Great Landscape Value** will be reviewed and possibly expanded in East Dorset. **Rural Design Guides** will be produced.

Key options:

- Creation of a settlement hierarchy of town, district and local centres.
- Focus new commercial development in Christchurch, Wimborne, Ferndown and Verwood town centres.
- Define town centre boundaries in key settlements.
- Potential new development sites identified in Christchurch town centre.
- Produce a list of locally listed buildings in East Dorset and update the list for Christchurch.
- Consider use of Article 4(1) and 4(2) Directions to control small scale development in Conservation Areas.
- Review Special Character Areas in East Dorset.
- Produce urban design guides for East Dorset.
- New open space and green infrastructure standards based on quantity, quality and accessibility.
- Areas of Great Landscape Value will be reviewed in East Dorset.
- Rural Design Guides will be produced.

Preferred Option Objective 3

To adapt to the challenges of climate change.

The impact of **carbon emissions from transport** will be reduced by more sustainable patterns of development in accessible locations, and by encouraging travel by bike, on foot, or by public transport. Developments will be expected to incorporate **carbon reduction, water and energy efficiency measures** as part of measures to reduce impact on climate change. At least 10% of total energy used on developments of 10 or more dwellings or 1,000m² of non-residential floorspace will come from decentralised, renewable or low carbon sources. Development will be located in areas at lowest **risk of flooding** as required by PPS25. A Supplementary Planning Document for Flood Risk will be produced in Christchurch on how the sequential and exception tests will apply locally.

Key options:

- Focus developments in accessible locations to reduce the need to travel.
- Develop prime transport corridors on major routes such as the A35, A337, A347, A349 & B3073.
- Encourage developments to incorporate carbon reduction, energy and water efficiency measures.
- Minimum percentage of energy from developments of 10+ dwellings or +1,000 m² non-residential floorspace to come from decentralised, renewable or low carbon sources.
- Smaller developments to make contributions to off site measures.
- Detailed flood risk Supplementary Planning Document to be produced for Christchurch.
- Requirement for flood management strategies in appropriate locations.

Preferred Option Objective 4

To enable the mixed economy of Christchurch and East Dorset to grow, and to develop new employment sectors.

Significant **new zones of employment development** will be located at Bournemouth Airport (15-20ha) and on key sites in East Dorset to serve the local and sub-regional economy. **A range of employment sites** will be provided meeting the needs of the local economy, and a hierarchy of sites will be developed so that certain sites can be reserved for higher order development in key employment sectors. Rural **farm diversification** will be supported in appropriate locations near key settlements such as Alderholt, Colehill, Corfe Mullen, Cranborne, Ferndown, St Leonards/St Ives,

Sixpenny Handley Sturminster Marshall, Verwood, West Moors, Wimborne, Burton, Winkton and Hurn, and adjacent to the main Christchurch urban area. The key environmental features which attract **tourism** will be protected, including Christchurch harbour, rivers and beaches and the Dorset Heathlands.

Key options:

- Provide an appropriate range of employment sites in appropriate locations to meet the requirements of business.
- Encourage a mix of business premises.
- Encouragement of live/work units in appropriate locations.
- Develop Bournemouth Airport and suitable sites in East Dorset to deliver employment land to serve the wider needs of South East Dorset.
- Define a series of high quality employment sites in Christchurch to deliver B1 (Light Industry and Office), B2 (General Industry) and B8 (Warehouse and Distribution) uses, at the Airport, Stony Lane, and sites fronting Somerford Road, as well as the employment sites in East Dorset.
- Adopt a more flexible approach to “non-B class” uses on other sites.
- Define locations where farm diversification will be acceptable, and a range of uses which could be permitted.
- Enhance and protect key features which encourage tourism, such as the Christchurch Harbour and beaches, the Dorset heaths, and historic town centres in Christchurch and Wimborne.

Preferred Option Objective 5

To provide a suitable, affordable and sustainable range of housing to meet local needs.

Sufficient housing will be provided in Christchurch and East Dorset to address local needs, whilst maintaining the character of local communities. This housing will include well planned sustainable new communities on greenfield land in appropriate locations. The **size and type of dwellings** (both open market and affordable) will reflect current and projected local need through the Strategic Housing Market Assessment. All residential development resulting in a net increase in dwellings will contribute towards **provision of affordable housing**, at a rate of 40% of total units

being developed. Development of 100% **affordable housing schemes may be considered exceptionally** in land adjoining rural and urban settlements. Criteria for the provision of **Gypsy and Traveller housing** sites will be developed.

Key options:

- Locate new housing development in the main urban areas primarily, in accessible locations close to shops and facilities.
- Release Green Belt land in appropriate locations north of Christchurch and in East Dorset to secure delivery of sustainable, well planned new housing areas.
- Set out robust and detailed policies to secure open space provision in line with new housing development, based on local needs, and on quality and accessibility as well as quantity.
- Monitor housing delivery against assessments of need and market demand to ensure appropriate types and sizes of dwelling are built.
- Set out a criteria based option to enable delivery of Gypsy and Traveller housing in appropriate locations.
- All new residential development to contribute to provision of affordable housing.
- Allow urban and rural exception sites to come forward in appropriate locations to enable delivery of affordable housing in smaller settlements.

Preferred Option Objective 6

To help our communities to travel less, and to travel more easily by a range of travel choices.

Development will be located in **the most accessible locations**, focused on prime transport corridors and town centres. New residential development will be located either close to existing facilities, or where good transport links exist to such facilities. **Prime transport corridors** will be developed in the short term on the A35 and A337 in Christchurch, the A348 in East Dorset, and the B3073 between the two areas. In the medium term, further prime transport corridors will be developed in East Dorset on parts of the A347, A349, B3074 and B3072, and corridors north of the A31(T).

Significant **transport improvements** are proposed at Canford Bottom Roundabout, A31(T) Merley to Ameysford (dualling), and B3073/A338 airport transport improvements. The overall aim will be to reduce congestion in key locations, by reducing the need to travel and encouraging public transport use, walking and cycling as alternatives to the car.

Key options:

- Locate development in the most sustainable locations, focused on the conurbation, prime transport corridors and town centres.
- New residential development located in close proximity to employment facilities and services, or in locations allowing access to a range of transport modes.
- Short term transport corridors A35, A337, A348 and B3073.
- Medium term transport corridors south of A31(T) on A347, A349 and B3074.
- Long term transport corridors north of A31(T) on B3072.
- Improve interchange facilities at Christchurch and Hinton Admiral railway stations.
- Improve bus services and expand real time information at bus stops.
- Encourage travel plans in line with new developments.
- Further expand and improve the footpath and cycleway network.
- Short term improvements at Canford Bottom roundabout.
- Medium term improvements along the A35 junctions through Christchurch.
- Medium to long term dualling of the A31(T) Merley – Ameysford, and B3073/A338 improvements.
- Encourage innovative ways of improving accessibility, such as a rural travel exchange, to reduce need to travel in rural areas, particularly in East Dorset.

Preferred Option Objective 7

To help our communities to thrive and to help people support each other.

The main town centres of Christchurch, Wimborne, Ferndown and Verwood will be **the focus for commercial, retail and community facilities**, with District centres and villages playing a supporting role. **New facilities and services** will be developed alongside the new neighbourhoods, and associated facilities will be provided as part of new employment development at Ferndown and Bournemouth Airport.

Key options:

- Encourage provision of facilities and services to support local communities, and to reflect the changing age profile of the area.
- Concentrate most facilities in accessible locations in existing urban areas of Christchurch, Burton, Highcliffe, Wimborne, Colehill, Ferndown, West Moors, Verwood, Alderholt, Cranborne, Sixpenny Handley, Three Legged Cross and Sturminster Marshall.
- Resist loss of facilities unless it is shown that they are no longer needed.
- Development to contribute toward provision of community facilities.
- Provision of a new community hall in Christchurch town centre.
- Develop new ways of delivering services in rural areas where it is not viable or practical to establish new facilities.
- New open space standards based on quantity, quality and accessibility. The Core Strategy Options Equalities Impact Assessment was used to appraise all of the strategic objectives proposed at Options stage.

Consultation Response

2.4 The response to the vision and objectives section of the Options consultation document is set out in the table below. The responses are broken down by distinct paragraph of the vision, or by objective.

2.5 One difficulty with the consultation, is that many comments received related to detailed policy matters rather than seeking changes to the vision or objectives. This section will summarise the consultation response, but the conclusions section will only set out amendments to the vision and objectives. Where these relate to the consultation this will be highlighted, however in the majority of cases comments made on the vision section will be dealt with further in other background papers.

2.6 The majority of respondents supported the vision, however the analysis below shows that there were some aspects which generated objection, notably issues around designated sites, green belt protection and strategic release, and the role of town and village centres. This pattern was reflected in comments received on the strategic objectives, with objections outweighing support on protecting the natural environment, housing, and transport.

2.7 There were very few comments on the vision as a whole, although there was strong support that the vision should be locally distinctive. Meyrick Estates did however consider that the vision lacked ambition and failed to provide a strategic way forward with a strong spatial plan. A few respondents did however comment that, as with many visions, the devil is in the detail contained in the supporting policies. Some comments were also made that the vision should refer to Christchurch's position within the South East Dorset conurbation.

Option	Support	Object	No Opinion	Total
Core Strategy Vision total	33	22	0	55
Para 3.26 Natural Environment as key asset.	3	1	0	4
Para 3.27 Protect designated sites and landscapes.	2	4	0	6
Para 3.28 Adapt to effects of climate change.	2	0	0	2
Para 3.29 Address housing needs.	4	2	0	6
Para 3.30 Step change in affordable housing delivery.	3	2	0	5
Para 3.31 Protect Green Belt except for strategic release.	2	4	0	6
Para 3.32 Enhance key town and village centres.	2	3	0	5
Para 3.33 Grow the economy and develop key sites.	2	1	0	3
Para 3.34 Better access and travel choice.	4	2	0	6
Para 3.35 Growth at Bournemouth Airport.	4	2	0	6
Para 3.36 Improvements to transport corridors in East Dorset, and to the A31.	3	1	0	4
Para 3.37 Develop our communities and address deprivation.	2	0	0	2
Objective 1 Safeguard the natural environment.	5	8	0	13
Objective 2 Maintain the character of towns and villages.	3	1	0	4
Objective 3 Adapt to challenges of climate change.	4	2	0	6

Option	Support	Object	No Opinion	Total
Objective 4 Enable a growing mixed economy.	6	4	0	10
Objective 5 Provide suitable, affordable and sustainable housing.	5	12	0	17
Objective 6 Help people travel less, and by a range of choices.	5	6	0	11
Objective 7 Help communities to thrive, and people to support each other.	2	1	0	3

Table 2.1

2.8 A more detailed summary of the key points made in responses to the vision and objectives is set out in the following paragraphs.

2.9 Natural environment as a key asset/protection of designated sites.

2.10 Several organisations (RSPB, Natural England, EDCP Environment Action Group) commented that the environment should be protected for its own sake as a key non-renewable resource, and because of the contribution it makes to people's health and well being.

2.11 A number of organisations felt that the list of natural features in paragraph 3.27 of the vision, was too narrow, and in particular that the general open countryside including the AONB, which makes up much of East Dorset receives little or no mention. The role of rivers and the coast was also considered to be underplayed.

2.12 A number of respondents felt that paragraphs 3.26 and 3.27 appeared to suggest that the protection of natural assets was aimed only at using them to enhance recreation and commercial activity, rather than for their own sake.

2.13 Further explanation of the rationale for reviewing Areas of Great Landscape Value designations was requested.

2.14 Adaptation to climate change.

2.15 This part of the vision and objectives was generally supported. Natural England did however comment that a wider range of adaptation measures should be considered. A further concern was expressed that whilst a strategy of concentrating development on prime transport corridors was laudable, this had to avoid creating traffic bottlenecks.

2.16 Housing needs and affordable housing.

2.17 Perhaps unsurprisingly, this element of the vision generated significant divergence of views. A number of agents and developers felt that, whilst the vision itself was laudable, there was little evidence to suggest that "step changes" in delivery of affordable housing was likely, and others expressed concerns that housing targets below that of the RSS would not deliver sufficient housing to achieve the aims of the vision. The ability of the Core Strategy to influence the size and type of housing delivered by the market was also questioned. Several respondents noted that it was difficult to comment given the lack of overall housing figures in East Dorset.

2.18 On the other hand, several respondents felt that any housing provided should be for local people, and that it simply would not be possible to keep on developing land for housing without compromising the character of towns and villages.

2.19 Some respondents suggested that it was misleading to suggest that provision of affordable housing would achieve a significant reduction in waiting lists, as set out in the vision. They sought a change in language to concentrate on addressing need and demand generally rather than eradicating waiting lists.

2.20 A number of developers questioned whether a level of 40% affordable housing could be achieved, especially given the high proportion of redevelopments in the area, where land values are already high. Set against this however, were several respondents who felt an even higher level of affordable housing should be sought.

2.21 The provision of a policy for urban and rural exception sites was supported.

2.22 Character of the urban and rural environment.

2.23 The majority of comments received on this topic related to the loss of Green Belt. Primarily, those responding wanted to see the Green Belt retained without exception, while others were critical of the wording used on protecting the Green Belt except for strategic release for housing and at Bournemouth Airport, which seemed to them to conflict.

2.24 Nonetheless a number of respondents representing the development industry supported the approach of strategic greenfield expansion to meet housing demand, and felt this to be an important part of the overall key strategy. EDCP Environment TAG noted however that there was very little reference to a vision for the character of any new areas to be developed.

2.25 The remaining comments focused on the extent to which the Council could or should control the type of business locating in town centres. One respondent noted that Bournemouth will remain the focus of shopping and entertainment, while others felt that the vision and objectives were too prescriptive in their references to niche shopping.

2.26 Economic growth and development of employment.

2.27 A range of comments was received on the elements of the vision and objectives relating to the economy. Some of these related to the relationship between economic growth and the local environment. Natural England welcomed the acknowledgement of the environment as a driver of economic growth, and that its protection is important in this regard. Others however felt that there could be conflict where employment sites and uses are developed in close proximity to designated sites.

2.28 Most other comments related to the overall employment strategy. There was request for more clarity on the hierarchy of sites, with one comment that this needs to reflect market aspirations.

2.29 There was concern among several respondents that the economic strategy was too reliant on 2 major employment sites at Ferndown and Bournemouth Airport. These respondents suggested that there should be more focus on providing sites and premises for small and medium sized businesses throughout the area, and more focus on sectors which already provide high levels of employment such as education, health and tourism.

2.30 Transport and accessibility.

2.31 This topic generated a considerable range of responses. There was support for the transportation vision and objectives from DCC, the Highways Agency, and a number of development industry representatives. It was however noted that the vision and objectives might need reviewed in the light of the South East Dorset Transport Study.

2.32 However there were also a number of objections expressed, in particular to development at Bournemouth Airport, and to the focus on prime transport corridors.

2.33 With regard to the airport, there were some in principle objections to further growth, either on grounds of impact on climate change, or simply due to the proximity of designated sites. The Airport Transport Forum supported the vision and objectives, but they and others called for significant improvements to bus services.

2.34 The concerns expressed on prime transport corridors was simply that focusing development on these corridors (especially the A31 and A35) would simply add to congestion. These respondents even questioned whether dualling the A31 would solve congestion, or rather simply push it further along the route.

2.35 Other comments received noted that walking and cycling could be better promoted, and that Green Infrastructure had an important role to play in encouraging people out of their cars. There was also a general concern as to how these transport improvements would be funded.

2.36 Helping our communities to thrive.

2.37 Very few comments were received on this element of the vision and objectives, and most were in support. There was a general comment that proposals were vague, and that funding would undoubtedly be an issue. One specific comment noted that a community hall for Christchurch would need a capacity of at least 200.

2.38 Christchurch Courier consultation.

2.39 In addition to the detailed consultation document, a simplified set of statements from the Preferred Vision was included in the consultation pullout from the Christchurch Courier, which was delivered to every household in the Borough. This generated almost 400 returns. Elements of the vision were simplified into 7 key areas, responses being as follows:

Statement	Agree	Disagree	Total
Natural Environment as key asset.	361	3	364
Adapt to effects of climate change.	330	23	353
Address housing needs.	251	95	346
Retain Green Belt except for strategic release.	253	93	346
Vibrant town centre.	314	47	361
Growing economy.	302	46	348
Easier travel and accessibility.	311	50	361

Table 2.2

2.40 This part of the Options consultation was designed simply to indicate levels of agreement for key aspects of the Core Strategy Vision. Respondents were not asked to provide detailed comments on the Courier form, however space was provided generally for any additional comments they wished to make on any aspect of the consultation.

2.41 In general all of the key aspects were well supported, most notably maintaining the natural environment as a key asset, and adapting to the effects of climate change. There was a higher level of disagreement for statements on addressing housing need, and on protecting the Green Belt except for strategic releases. This reflected more detailed concerns at the development of the urban extension at Roeshot Hill.

2.42 A number of those responding also made additional comments, some of which related to the vision and objectives of the Core Strategy. Several responses made the point that, whilst not disagreeing with the vision statement, its high level nature means that the devil may be in the detail, when policies come to be implemented.

2.43 Unfortunately, most comments received on this part of the options consultation were phrased more as concerns rather than seeking any modification to the vision. The most significant responses were on the following issues:

- That further growth, especially housing growth will ruin what is special about Christchurch, and therefore the vision is flawed in this respect.
- If further housing is to be provided, it should meet local needs and not simply encourage more people into the area, especially to retire.
- Many responses questioned the capacity of the transport network to cope with further growth, and the largest single issue response related to the need for a Christchurch Bypass or outer relief road.
- There was a general view that, whilst laudable, the vision may not be achievable due to the severe funding constraints imposed by the current global economic crisis.
- It was felt that the town centre had declined in recent years, and was now too reliant on coffee shops and charity shops, and generally not providing sufficient retailing for locals and visitors.
- Whilst one or two respondents felt that climate change was a myth, others felt that it was important that planning for climate change should not sterilise areas of the town for future development.

Consideration of Evidence and Policy

2.44 The main Government planning policy guidance in respect of the overall vision and strategy of the Core Strategy remains as it was at the Options consultation. No emphasis is now placed on the Regional Spatial Strategy following Government announcements that this tier of planning would be abolished upon enactment of the Localism Act.

2.45 It should be noted however that the national context for planning is changing, following the election of a new Coalition Government in May 2010. The emerging National Planning Policy Framework is intended to consolidate and simplify the current range of PPGs, PPSs and some Circulars into a single, straightforward policy framework.

2.46 Although only a consultation draft document at this stage, it is a useful insight into current Government thinking about the role of planning. The Framework notes that planning shapes the places where people live and work, and plays a vital role in building our economy and in supporting strong, vibrant and healthy communities. There is a much greater emphasis on planning enabling and delivering sustainable development and growth.

2.47 Among the core planning principles set out in the document, is that planning should be genuinely plan-led, with succinct Local Plans setting out a positive long term vision for an area. Other core planning principles include:

- Proactively driving and supporting the development that the country needs.
- Taking local circumstances into account when formulating policies and making decisions.
- Take account of the environmental quality or potentially quality of land in considering future use.
- Protect and enhance environmental and heritage assets, and reduce pollution.
- Make effective use of land, promote mixed developments that create more vibrant places, and encourage multiple benefits from the use of land in urban and rural areas.
- Enable the re-use of existing resources.
- Actively manage patterns of growth to make the fullest use of public transport, walking and cycling.

- Support local strategies to improve health and wellbeing for all.
- Always seek to secure a good standard of amenity for existing and future occupants of land and buildings.

2.48 In the context of Local Plans, the policy framework encourages them to be aspirational, but realistic. Strategic priorities should be set out for:

- Housing and economic development requirements;
- The provision of retail, leisure and other commercial development;
- The provision of infrastructure for transport, minerals, waste, energy, telecoms, water supply and water quality.
- The provision of health, security, community infrastructure and other local facilities; and
- Climate change mitigation and adaptation.

2.49 The framework also notes that Local Plans are the key to delivering development that reflects the vision and aspiration of local communities.

‘Options for Consideration’ Sustainability Appraisal

2.50 Protection of designated sites is a requirement of law, but equally an important objective for the Core Strategy in order to protect features and habitats which contribute to the character of Christchurch and East Dorset. This objective scores positively against a range of SA objectives, although the contributions from housing toward greenspace and heathland mitigation may impact upon housing provision and affordability in certain locations. Green Belt release needs to be handled sensitively to ensure maintenance of local distinctiveness, and habitat protection.

Relevant Sustainability Appraisal Objectives	Core Strategy Objective 1 - to manage and safeguard the natural environment.
Objective 1: Protect, enhance and expand habitats and protected species.	Positive impact.
Objective 2: Make sustainable use of resources.	Positive impact.
Objective 5: Provide access to meet people's need.	Uncertain impact.
Objective 7: Create conditions to improve health, promoting healthy lifestyles.	Uncertain impact.
Objective 8: Help make suitable housing available and affordable for everybody.	Negative impact.

Relevant Sustainability Appraisal Objectives	Core Strategy Objective 1 - to manage and safeguard the natural environment.
Objective 11: Maintain and enhance local distinctiveness and create places, spaces and buildings that work well, wear well, and look well.	Positive impact.
Objective 12: Facilitate a sustainable and growing economy that creates economic and employment opportunity, as well as providing for vital and viable town centres.	Strong positive impact.

Table 2.3

2.51 Provision of open space on the basis of quantity, quality and accessibility standards has positive impacts across a range of SA objectives. Protection of conservation areas and locally listed buildings has benefits but the use of Article 4 directions may restrict people's ability to improve their homes. The wider objective of creating a hierarchy of centres scores well, but impacts on character and local distinctiveness of larger centres from higher levels of development will need to be carefully considered.

Relevant Sustainability Appraisal Objectives	Core Strategy Objective 2 - to maintain the character of towns and villages and create vibrant centres.
Objective 1: Protect, enhance and expand habitats and protected species.	Positive impact.
Objective 2: Make sustainable use of resources.	Positive impact.
Objective 4: Minimise factors contributing to climate change.	Positive impact.
Objective 5: Provide access to meet people's need.	Positive impact.
Objective 7: Create conditions to improve health, promoting healthy lifestyles.	Strong positive impact.
Objective 8: Help make suitable housing available and affordable for everybody.	Negative impact.
Objective 10: Protect and enhance historic buildings, archaeological sites and other culturally important features.	Positive impact.

Relevant Sustainability Appraisal Objectives	Core Strategy Objective 2 - to maintain the character of towns and villages and create vibrant centres.
Objective 11: Maintain and enhance local distinctiveness and create places, spaces and buildings that work well, wear well, and look well.	Strong positive impact.
Objective 12: Facilitate a sustainable and growing economy that creates economic and employment opportunity, as well as providing for vital and viable town centres.	Strong positive impact.

Table 2.4

2.52 Future impacts of climate change are uncertain, however flood risk is clearly likely to be a significant issue in Christchurch and parts of East Dorset over time. The strategy of locating development away from areas of flood risk has generally positive impacts, although may affect economic potential of the airport and Christchurch/Wimborne town centres to some degree. The general location of development in sustainable locations and key town centres has positive impacts against a range of objectives, and in terms of climate change is likely to result in lower carbon emissions from road traffic, although congestion may offset this.

Relevant Sustainability Appraisal Objectives	Core Strategy Objective 3 - to adapt to the challenges of climate change.
Objective 2: Make sustainable use of resources.	Strong positive impact.
Objective 3: Minimise pollution.	Negative impact.
Objective 4: Minimise factors contributing to climate change.	Positive impact.
Objective 6: Provide a safe and secure environment.	Positive impact.
Objective 8: Help make suitable housing available and affordable for everybody.	Uncertain impact.
Objective 12: Facilitate a sustainable and growing economy that creates economic and employment opportunity, as well as providing for vital and viable town centres.	Uncertain impact.

Table 2.5

2.53 The Core Strategy objectives on economic growth are generally positive, although development in certain locations, notably the airport, will need careful consideration to minimise impact on habitats. Diversification of the rural economy may also lead to some uncertainty regarding impact on local distinctiveness.

Relevant Sustainability Appraisal Objectives	Core Strategy Objective 4 - to enable the mixed economy to grow, and to develop new employment sectors.
Objective 1: Protect, enhance and expand habitats and protected species.	Uncertain impact.
Objective 2: Make sustainable use of resources.	Negative impact.
Objective 5: Provide access to meet people's need.	Strong positive impact.
Objective 8: Help make suitable housing available and affordable for everybody.	Uncertain impact.
Objective 9: Help communities to support social cohesion through a reduction in the fear of crime and the provision of basic services and facilities, learning, training, skills knowledge and culture.	Positive impact
Objective 11: Maintain and enhance local distinctiveness and create places, spaces and buildings that work well, wear well, and look well.	Uncertain impact.
Objective 12: Facilitate a sustainable and growing economy that creates economic and employment opportunity, as well as providing for vital and viable town centres.	Positive impact.

Table 2.6

2.54 Core Strategy objectives aim to deliver a supply of housing sufficient to address local needs and demands set out in the SHMA. A step change in affordable housing provision is also set out, and generally the Core Strategy objectives seek to monitor housing delivery to ensure the type and size of housing provided reflects the need. Provision of gypsy and traveller pitches is contentious and numbers are disputed, which may affect supply. There may also be impacts on employment land supply due to pressures for sites to be approved for housing.

Relevant Sustainability Appraisal Objectives	Core Strategy Objective 5 - to provide a suitable, affordable and sustainable range of housing to meet local needs.
Objective 1: Protect, enhance and expand habitats and protected species.	Negative impact.
Objective 2: Make sustainable use of resources.	Strong negative impact.
Objective 4: Minimise factors contributing to climate change.	Negative impact.
Objective 6: Provide a safe and secure environment.	Strong positive impact.
Objective 7: Create conditions to improve health, promoting healthy lifestyles.	Strong positive impact.
Objective 8: Help make suitable housing available and affordable for everybody.	Strong positive impact.
Objective 9: Help communities to support social cohesion through a reduction in the fear of crime and the provision of basic services and facilities, learning, training, skills, knowledge and culture.	Strong positive impact.
Objective 10: Protect and enhance historic buildings, archaeological sites and other culturally important features.	Positive impact.
Objective 12: Facilitate a sustainable and growing economy that creates economic and employment opportunity, as well as providing for vital and viable town centres.	Strong positive impact.

Table 2.7

2.55 The Core Strategy objectives focus on enabling people to access services through a range of transport modes, while also reducing congestion on key corridors. The impacts are generally positive, but some benefits may take time to deliver and will not be achieved until later in the plan period.

Relevant Sustainability Appraisal Objectives	Core Strategy Objective 6 - to help our communities to travel less, and to travel more easily by a range of choices.
Objective 1: Protect, enhance and expand habitats and protected species.	Uncertain impact.
Objective 2: Make sustainable use of resources.	Positive impact.
Objective 3: Minimise pollution.	Uncertain impact.
Objective 4: Minimise factors contributing to climate change.	Positive impact.
Objective 5: Provide access to meet people's need.	Strong positive impact.
Objective 7: Create conditions to improve health, promoting healthy lifestyles.	Strong positive impact.
Objective 12: Facilitate a sustainable and growing economy that creates economic and employment opportunity, as well as providing for vital and viable town centres.	Strong positive impact.

Table 2.8

2.56 Locating the majority of new development at the main centres is likely to be a sustainable objective, particularly in terms of reducing car trips, and offering people a range of travel choices to access key services. There may however be some impact on the character of historic centres, and a risk of increased crime/anti social behaviour, if the night time economy is not adequately planned and managed. Provision of facilities in new housing and major employment areas is also likely to reduce car trips generated to access basic services. There is also potential to attract business to locate in well planned estates which offer employees basic facilities close to their workplace.

Relevant Sustainability Appraisal Objectives	Core Strategy Objective 7 - to help our communities to thrive, and help people to support each other.
Objective 2: Make sustainable use of resources.	Strong positive impact.
Objective 3: Minimise pollution.	Uncertain impact.
Objective 4: Minimise factors contributing to climate change.	Strong positive impact.

Relevant Sustainability Appraisal Objectives	Core Strategy Objective 7 - to help our communities to thrive, and help people to support each other.
Objective 5: Provide access to meet people's need.	Strong positive impact.
Objective 6: Provide a safe and secure environment.	Negative impact.
Objective 7: Create conditions to improve health, promoting healthy lifestyles.	Strong positive impact.
Objective 8: Help make suitable housing available and affordable for everybody.	Positive impact.
Objective 9: Help communities to support social cohesion through a reduction in the fear of crime and the provision of basic services and facilities, learning, training, skills, knowledge and culture.	Positive impact.
Objective 10: Protect and enhance historic buildings, archaeological sites and other culturally important features.	Uncertain impact.
Objective 12: Facilitate a sustainable and growing economy that creates economic and employment opportunity, as well as providing for vital and viable town centres.	Positive impact.

Table 2.9

'Options for Consideration' Habitats Regulations Assessment

2.57 An interim Habitats Regulations Assessment was undertaken for the Core Strategy Options consultation, as a precursor to a more detailed assessment to be undertaken at Pre-Submission stage. This Assessment concluded that neither the Vision nor the seven strategic objectives were likely to have a significant impact on designated sites.

2.58 This however was with the exception to a reference in the Vision to the Council's support for a Christchurch Bypass. Whilst this is not a firm proposal in the Core Strategy, the Habitats Regulations Assessment concluded that:

- *Christchurch Borough Council's intention in the Core Strategy Vision to press for development of a Christchurch Bypass road could have a significant effect on the European sites listed, depending on the route of any such bypass. However, no options for the route of the bypass are presented in the Core Strategy, thus effects can not be determined.*

‘Options for Consideration’ Health Impact Assessment

2.59 The Core Strategy Options Health Impact Assessment was used to appraise all of the strategic objectives set out in the Options consultation document.

2.60 In the majority of cases, the assessment concluded generally positive impacts on health from the objectives, particularly measures to protect natural greenspace, provide recreation facilities, and increase opportunities for walking and cycling. The objectives also aim to provide new health and medical facilities in line with new housing developments as required.

2.61 There was a concern that higher levels of development, especially in locations less well served by public transport, could result in reductions in air quality through higher vehicle movements. The physical loss of Green Belt and other open land for housing and employment development could also have a detrimental effect on health, if not adequately addressed through new recreation opportunities.

‘Options for Consideration’ Equalities Impact Assessment

2.62 The Core Strategy Options Equalities Impact Assessment was used to appraise all of the strategic objectives proposed at Options stage.

2.63 In general, the objectives were found to have positive impacts on equalities, though providing a range of housing and employment opportunities, making travel and access easier, and promoting facilities in town and village centres.

2.64 The Equalities Impact Assessment did note some potentially negative impacts in respect of concentrating services and facilities in the most accessible locations, which might disadvantage certain groups, perhaps the young and the elderly, living in more rural locations without access to a car.

Infrastructure Requirements

2.65 The Core Strategy vision and strategic objectives are designed to set the context for the more detailed policies within the document. Details of infrastructure requirements are therefore considered in the background papers dealing with these policies. This background paper does not therefore address infrastructure requirements.

Conclusions

2.66 Although national planning policy is changing, there is still an expectation that planning should be genuinely plan-led, with succinct Local Plans setting out a positive long term vision for an area.

2.67 In the context of Local Plans, the policy framework encourages them to be aspirational, but realistic. Strategic priorities should be set out for:

- Housing and economic development requirements;
- The provision of retail, leisure and other commercial development;

- The provision of infrastructure for transport, minerals, waste, energy, telecoms, water supply and water quality.
- The provision of health, security, community infrastructure and other local facilities; and
- Climate change mitigation and adaptation.

2.68 The framework also notes that Local Plans are the key to delivering development that reflects the vision and aspiration of local communities.

2.69 The overall vision was considered too high level to be subject to detailed sustainability appraisal, however the supporting objectives were. In general terms these have scored primarily positive impacts, although inevitably some potential conflicts have been identified as follows:

- The need to deliver sufficient housing against the need to manage and safeguard the natural environment, and maintain the character of towns and villages.
- Concentration of development on transport corridors and town centres against the aim of minimising pollution.
- Developing sufficient employment land in a range of locations against making sustainable use of land resources.
- Locating the majority of commercial, retail and leisure development in town centres, against creating safe and secure environments.

2.70 In terms of the Habitats Regulations Assessment, neither the vision nor the objectives were considered to have a significant impact on designated sites, with the exception of references to the Council's support for a Christchurch Bypass. In this case however, the Core Strategy does not propose any options or route for the bypass, so the HRA concluded that effects cannot be determined. It is not therefore proposed to amend this reference in the vision.

2.71 The Equalities Impact assessment was broadly positive, although the concentration of most facilities and services in accessible locations could cause some disadvantage to younger and older people in more rural locations.

2.72 In terms of Health the main concern centred on the need to carefully plan new open space and recreation provision in line with new greenfield housing development to compensate for its relative remoteness from existing facilities and the loss of Green Belt and countryside which might be involved.

2.73 Consultation on the vision took two main forms - the response to the consultation document, and a simplified set of questions on the vision placed in the Christchurch Courier pullout. The latter resulted in strong support for all aspects of the vision, albeit with more objection to the provision of housing and loss of Green Belt.

2.74 Of the detailed comments the major points of concern and objection centred on:

- The extent to which housing provision was necessary.
- Whether the housing options would actually deliver sufficient housing to meet demand.
- That the Green Belt should be protected from development.
- That protection of the environment should be for its own sake and not just as a driver for sustainable growth.
- That further areas should be specifically mentioned in the vision for protection.

- That the employment strategy should be less reliant on 2 large sites, and that growth at Bournemouth Airport was unsustainable.
- That concentrating development on prime transport corridors would only lead to greater congestion and bottlenecks.

2.75 In the majority of cases, the objections raised in respect of the vision and objectives relate more to detailed policy options - for example the detailed debate on housing provision and levels of affordable housing. These will be dealt with in background papers relating to specific topics within the Core Strategy.

2.76 The table below deals with the main amendments to wording suggested for the vision and objectives together with a response from the Local Planning Authority in each case. The amendments are taken generically rather than referring to each specific suggestion and these comments overlap in many cases.

Core Strategy Ref:	Suggested Amendment	Response
Vision general	Amend wording to indicate that wildlife habitats should be protected for their own sake, and not simply to sustain recreation and commercial activity.	Add additional wording to paragraph 3.27 of the Vision to state: "The Dorset Heathlands.....will be protected and enhanced for their intrinsic value, and to ensure....."
Vision general	There is no mention of improving people's quality of life.	It is considered that many aspects of the vision and objectives will lead to an improved quality of life for local people and visitors. It is not therefore proposed to add this wording specifically.
Vision general	There should be specific mention of the importance of community facilities in achieving sustainable communities.	Add further wording to second sentence of paragraph 3.37 of the Vision as follows: "Community facilities will be safeguarded and support will be given....." No amendment is considered necessary to Objective 7.
Vision general	Specific mention should be made of the education and health sectors which provide significant employment in the area.	Add reference to these sectors to paragraph 3.33 of the vision: The economy of the area.....sectors such as tourism, health and education, but also....."
Vision 3.27	The importance of rivers, wetlands and riverine environments, and the coast should be included.	Add reference to rivers and the coast to paragraph 3.27 of the vision: "The Dorset Heathlands.....harbour, the coast, beaches and rivers will be..."

Core Strategy Ref:	Suggested Amendment	Response
Vision 3.28	The text should refer to the protection of ecosystem services.	No amendment proposed - this is a complex term and would require definition which would in turn make the Vision too complex.
Vision 3.30	Delete references to a significant reduction in housing waiting lists as this is unlikely to be achieved.	No amendment proposed - reducing housing waiting lists is a major aspiration of the Core Strategy and this statement is considered important.
Vision 3.30	Delete references to a step change in affordable housing delivery, and to control over the character and type of housing in each local area - these are unrealistic aspirations.	No amendment proposed - delivering housing of the right type, tenure and price is a major aspiration of the Core Strategy and this statement is considered important.
Vision 3.30	Text should refer to affordable housing "for local people".	No amendment proposed - the wording of the vision is considered clear.
Vision 3.31	The Green Belt should be retained and protected without exception.	No amendment proposed - there will be a need for some well planned strategic green belt release for housing and employment, and the text is considered adequate.
Vision 3.31	There should be a reference to the character of new developments.	No amendment proposed to this paragraph of the vision, however add further wording to Objective 5, paragraph 3.52 as follows: "...This housing will include well planned sustainable new communities on greenfield land in appropriate locations which will take their design influence from the local area but which will also have their own distinct character and sense of place."
Vision 3.32	Delete reference to new ways of delivering services in rural areas, and remove detailed references to specific types of use in centres.	No amendment proposed - this wording is considered to reflect a general reality that service provision in rural areas has changed and will continue to change in years to come.
Vision 3.34	Amend to refer to locations well served by public transport in Christchurch.	Add wording to first sentence of paragraph 3.34: "The area.....or to cycle, with major development focused in locations accessible by different means of transport."

Core Strategy Ref:	Suggested Amendment	Response
Vision 3.35	Add reference to integrating public transport services with a safeguarded and enhanced high quality natural environment.	No amendment proposed - this additional wording is not considered necessary in the light of other aspects of the vision and objectives.
Vision 3.36	Text should acknowledge the environmental damage caused by a West Moors bypass.	No amendment proposed - the West Moors Bypass is not Core Strategy proposal.
Objective 1	Should refer to the AONB, and to strategic nature areas.	No amendment proposed - the AONB is referred to in this Objective, paragraph 3.40.
Objective 1	Should have a reference to supporting investment in agriculture.	This is agreed, but it is considered more appropriate to include this reference in Objective 4: Agriculture and horticulture will be supported, and rural farm diversification will be encouraged in appropriate locations...."
Objective 1	Add reference to the importance of rivers in the area.	Add wording to Objective 1: Important natural features such as Christchurch Harbour, the coast and beaches, rivers, and the"
Objective 1	There should be new housing close to Bournemouth Airport and the reference to Green Belt release amended accordingly.	No amendment proposed - housing in the Green Belt around Bournemouth Airport is not part of the Core Strategy and is considered inappropriate.
Objective 2	Reference should be made here to special character areas.	Add text to the Objective: "Special Character Areas and Areas of Great Landscape Value....."
Objective 4	The text should be amended to place less reliance on Bournemouth Airport, by adding "if required" after this site. The strategy should be to locate employment sites closer to where people live.	No amendment proposed - Bournemouth Airport is and will remain a major employment site serving Christchurch, East Dorset, and the conurbation. As proposed, the amendment would downgrade its importance.
Objective 4	Add reference to new environmental features will be created.	Add wording to the objective last sentence as follows: "The key environmental features.....Heathlands. Opportunities will be taken to create new features and habitats where possible."

Core Strategy Ref:	Suggested Amendment	Response
Objective 4	Delete reference to encouragement of live/work units.	No amendment proposed - the provision of live/work units remains an appropriate part of an economic strategy for the area, and should not be ruled out.
Objective 5	Little prospect of delivering sufficient housing to meet local needs. Amend to state that "if possible housing will be provided to address local needs".	No amendment proposed - the revised wording is considered to weaken this key objective.
Objective 5	Delete reference to rate of 40% of residential units to be affordable.	No amendment proposed - this remains a key objective of the Core Strategy.
Objective 6	This objective could include references to the importance of green infrastructure in promoting sustainable travel.	Add new final sentence to Objective 6: "The development of new Green Infrastructure, including footpaths, bridleways and cycleways, will also encourage people to enjoy recreation without the need to travel by car."
Objective 6	References to public transport, walking and cycling should appear at the start of this objective.	Move the last sentence of Objective 6 to the start of the paragraph.

Table 2.10

3 Pre Submission Options

- 3.1 Following the options consultation, appraisal of options, and a review of evidence and policy, it is proposed that the Vision and Strategic Objectives as set out in the Options Consultation should be taken forward to the draft Pre-Submission Core Strategy.
- 3.2 This is subject to the following amendments arising from the Options consultation as set out in Table 2.10 of this background paper.
- 3.3 The proposed Pre-Submission draft vision and objectives are as follows:

The Core Strategy Vision

The natural environment of Christchurch and East Dorset and their historic and thriving towns and villages are, and will, continue to be the most important assets for the area. This special environment will be used to sustain the growth of the local economy, and the welfare of its local communities, rather than being used as a reason to turn our back on growth which can be achieved sustainably.

The Dorset Heathlands, the Cranborne Chase and West Wiltshire Downs Area Of Outstanding Natural Beauty, Christchurch Harbour, the coast, beaches and rivers will be protected and enhanced for their intrinsic value and to ensure that recreation and commercial activity sustains these areas.

The area will adapt to the emerging demands of climate change through clear strategies to reduce risk of flooding, and through encouraging high standards of building design and construction.

The unmet housing needs of the area will be reduced, with housing delivered of a type and tenure which meets the aspirations of those wishing to buy or rent. An element of this housing will be in the form of new, well planned, sustainable residential areas in both Christchurch and East Dorset. These will be attractive new areas, including high quality, sustainable homes, areas of open space, new community facilities, and improved transport links to the surrounding area.

Housing will also continue to be delivered from redevelopment within the existing towns, but developments will now better reflect the character and type of housing found in each local area, and will make appropriate contributions to infrastructure. Almost all new housing development will contribute to the provision of affordable housing, creating a step change in delivery of affordable dwellings and a significant reduction in waiting lists.

The Green Belt policy will be kept in place to protect the character of the area, subject to limited alterations of boundaries to enable its extension and elsewhere to allow for some housing and employment growth to help meet the needs of the local communities.

Historic towns such as Christchurch and Wimborne will be vibrant centres of commercial and cultural activity, with niche shopping, and varied attractions and facilities for residents and visitors alike. Other key local centres in Ferndown, Verwood, West Moors and Highcliffe will support shops and services for their local communities, with villages and smaller neighbourhood centres providing basic services. New ways of delivering services and facilities in rural areas will be developed.

The economy of the area will grow, both by sustaining its traditional sectors such as tourism, health and education, but also by creating a mixed economy with emphasis on growth in new knowledge based sectors, including engineering, creative and technical industries, especially the green knowledge economy. Economic growth will be sustained by the creation of major high quality employment sites in East Dorset and at Bournemouth Airport, and by the protection of other well located sites for key employment uses. These will have an important role in sustaining the economy of South East Dorset.

The area will be easier to get around, not just for those who have a car, but for those who wish to use public transport, to walk or to cycle, with major development focussed in locations accessible by different means of transport. In Christchurch, development will be focused on the existing public transport corridors on the A35 and A337 and better links will be made to Christchurch and Hinton Admiral stations, with the urban extension also linked to the transport network. Christchurch Borough Council will continue to press for the development of a Christchurch Bypass as a long term solution to the town's traffic problems.

The Airport will grow sustainably into a significant regional transport hub, providing scheduled and charter flights to a wide range of business and tourist destinations. Both the airport and its business parks will be linked to the surrounding conurbation by public transport services.

In East Dorset, transport corridors will be developed to help promote a wider choice of transport, including walking, cycling and public transport. These corridors will include linking the towns and villages of Ferndown, West Moors, Three Legged Cross and Verwood, and improving links to Wimborne from Poole. Improvements to Canford Bottom Roundabout and dualling the A31 from Ferndown to Merley will reduce congestion and improve connectivity with the rest of Dorset and Hampshire.

Perhaps most important of all, our communities will thrive. There will be targeted regeneration to provide improved housing, facilities and services in the Somerford, Leigh Park and Heatherlands Estates. Community facilities will be safeguarded and support will be given to the community groups and organisations to develop volunteering, and to obtain premises from which to deliver services. The provision of a new community facility in Christchurch town centre will be supported.

3.4 The Preferred Core Strategy Vision will continue to be supported by 7 Strategic Objectives. References to policy options will now be removed.

Objective 1

To manage and safeguard the natural environment of Christchurch and East Dorset.

The **Green Belt** will be retained and protected, except for strategic release of land to provide new housing, and for employment development in East Dorset and at Bournemouth Airport. Impact on **designated sites** will be avoided, and residential development will contribute to mitigation of development on Heathland habitats. New **greenspace** will be provided as part of major housing proposals. Important **natural features** such as Christchurch Harbour, the coast, rivers and beaches and the Cranborne Chase Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty will be protected and enhanced.

Objective 2

To maintain and improve the character of the towns and villages, and to create vibrant local centres.

A clear **hierarchy of centres** will be developed, with a clear strategy for the major centres. Town and district centre boundaries will be created in Christchurch, Wimborne, Ferndown, Verwood and West Moors to help create a vibrant centre with a range of services and facilities. **Locally listed buildings** will now form part of the heritage protection strategy, and a local list will be created in East Dorset, and the Christchurch Local List updated. The Christchurch Borough Character Assessment and design standards in East Dorset will be used to guide design of new development.

Article 4(1) and 4(2) Directions will be considered to control small scale works which might damage the character of **Conservation Areas** as part of conservation area management plans. **Open space** will be provided alongside new residential development. **Special Character Areas** and **Areas of Great Landscape Value** will be reviewed and possibly expanded in East Dorset. **Rural Design Guides** will be produced.

Objective 3

To adapt to the challenges of climate change.

The impact of **carbon emissions from transport** will be reduced by more sustainable patterns of development in accessible locations, and by encouraging travel by bike, on foot, or by public transport. Developments will be expected to incorporate **carbon reduction, water and energy efficiency measures** as part of measures to reduce impact on climate change. At least 15% of total energy used on developments of 10 or more dwellings or 1,000m² of non-residential floorspace will come from decentralised, renewable or low carbon sources. Development will be located in areas at lowest **risk of flooding**. A Supplementary Planning Document for Flood Risk will be produced on how the sequential and exception tests will apply locally.

Objective 4

To enable the mixed economy of Christchurch and East Dorset to grow, and to develop new employment sectors.

Significant **new zones of employment development** will be located at Bournemouth Airport (15-30ha) and on key sites in East Dorset to serve the local and sub-regional economy. **A range of employment sites** will be provided across the area, meeting the needs of the local economy, and a hierarchy of sites will be developed so that certain sites can be reserved for higher order development in key employment sectors. Agriculture and horticulture will be supported and rural **farm diversification** will be encouraged in appropriate locations near key settlements such as Alderholt, Cranborne, Sixpenny Handley, Sturminster Marshall, Burton, Winkton and Hurn. The key environmental features which attract **tourism** will be protected, including Christchurch harbour, rivers and beaches and the Dorset Heathlands. Opportunities will be taken to create new features and habitats where possible.

Objective 5

To deliver a suitable, affordable and sustainable range of housing to provide for local needs.

Sufficient housing will be provided in Christchurch and East Dorset to reduce local needs, whilst maintaining the character of local communities. This housing will include well planned sustainable new communities in appropriate locations. The **size and type of dwellings** (both open market and affordable) will reflect current and projected local need through the Strategic Housing Market Assessment. All residential development resulting in a net increase in dwellings will contribute towards **provision of affordable housing**, at a rate of 35% of total units being developed. Development of 100% **affordable housing schemes may be considered exceptionally** in land adjoining rural and urban settlements. Criteria for the provision of **Gypsy and Traveller housing** sites will be developed.

Objective 6

To reduce the need for our communities to travel, and to do so more easily by a range of travel choices.

The overall aim will be to reduce congestion in key locations, by reducing the need to travel and encouraging public transport use, walking and cycling as alternatives to the car. Development will be located in **the most accessible locations**, focused on prime transport corridors and town centres. New residential development will be located either close to existing facilities, or where good transport links exist to such facilities.

Prime transport corridors will be developed in the short term on the A35 and A337 in Christchurch, the A348 in East Dorset, and the B3073 between the two areas. In the medium term, further prime transport corridors will be developed in East Dorset on parts of the A347, A349, B3074 and B3072, and corridors north of the A31(T).

Key transport schemes proposed to support the Core Strategy will be developed:

- A35 Fountains roundabout, Stony Lane roundabout, Staple Cross (Salisbury Road), Somerford roundabout - junction improvements.
- B3073 junction improvements from Parley Cross to A338 Blackwater Junction, and road widening from Chapel Gate roundabout to Blackwater Junction, and along the A338 to Cooper Dean Roundabout.
- A31(T), dualling between Merley and Ameysford.

The development of new Green Infrastructure including footpaths, bridleways and cycleways, will also encourage people to enjoy recreation without the need to travel by car.

Objective 7

To help our communities to thrive and to help people support each other.

The main town centres of Christchurch, Wimborne, Ferndown and Verwood will be **the focus for commercial, retail and community facilities**, with District centres and villages playing a supporting role. **New facilities and services** will be developed alongside the new neighbourhoods, and associated facilities will be provided as part of new employment development at Ferndown and Bournemouth Airport.