

2 POLICY AND STAKEHOLDER CONTEXT

2.1 General comment and summary

The whole process of this study has been driven by policy: national, regional and local. It is only through being aware of this policy and ensuring that all recommendations and actions within this report in some way link back to the former will this study have relevance to and be accepted by the widest possible range of stakeholders.

A wide ranging review of the various agencies, organisations and interests involved in Open Space, Sport and Recreation (OS,S&R) has been undertaken. A review has also been undertaken of strategies and policies at local, sub regional, regional, and national levels. The full review is contained in a separate **Appendix 1**. The following paragraphs represent the 'headline' conclusions.

This review has been very helpful in the following ways:

- It has demonstrated the very wide range of interests involved in providing, managing, facilitating and using open space, sport, recreation, and green space opportunities.
- It demonstrates the vital contribution that open space, recreation and green space opportunities can make in addressing a wide range of national, regional and local policy themes and issues; and the need therefore to continually cross refer the findings and conclusions of this study to relevant policy, so achieving greatest relevance and efficacy.
- It shows that the policy and stakeholder environment is continually changing in terms of initiatives (especially national government and Quango edicts, campaigns, and grant regimes). At long last there is acceptance of healthy exercise as a valuable weapon in the preventative wing of the Dept of Health/NHS. There are now also better linkages between children's and youth service delivery and recreational opportunities.
- It therefore demonstrates the relationships between OS,S&R opportunities and the various health, children, youth and green space agendas that figure so prominently in national policy and in both Christchurch and East Dorset Councils' Community Plans (see below).
- It highlights that there are plenty of opportunities for external support and funding for policies and initiatives arising out of this study. First and foremost must be the major allocations proposed to generate major contributions from developers for the provision and maintenance of open space, sports and recreation. However, there may well be other sources of funding so long as initiatives arising from this study and potential Green Space Strategies can be shown to help achieve relevant policy agendas.

It highlights the desperate need for new, locally relevant and justified planning and management standards to cover all manner of OS,S&R that might legitimately be funded by developers. It also highlights the way in which existing recreational spaces are treated within the two local plans, as a starting point for consideration of whether there is justification for reviewing the development plan designations affecting open spaces to better reflect their distinctive value for recreation.

2.2 Specific links to the Community Plans of each local authority

2.2.1 Christchurch Borough

The Christchurch Community Plan has a series of visions linked to core themes:

- Community Safety - where crime levels are low and people feel safe
- Culture, Learning and Lifestyle - a Christchurch which is valued for its range of cultural and educational opportunities and where quality of life is high
- Generations - where relationships between people and different generations are strong and where all sections of the community are valued
- Health and Care - where good health is promoted, ill health treated, vulnerable groups supported
- High Quality Environment - where the high quality natural and built environment is promoted and enhanced
- Affordable Housing - where people have access to housing appropriate to their circumstances
- Increased Prosperity - a place which is economically vibrant, and where people want to live, study, work, bring up children, be supported through unemployment
- Travel and Access - where travel is efficient, affordable and sustainable

2.2.3 East Dorset District

The District wide **Community Plan** has six current themes:

- Crime and Safety - to work in partnership to improve the local quality of life by reducing levels of crime, disorder and anti-social behaviour and fear of crime in a cost effective way
- Housing - to improve the supply of housing to meet the housing needs of all sectors of the community, both in the private and public sector and to respond to those needs accordingly

- Health – to engage and consult with the local communities of East Dorset, to determine the priorities for action to improve people’s health and to encourage partnerships amongst the voluntary, private and public organisations to the area to work together to achieve these improvements.
- Environment - to protect and improve the unique environment of East Dorset – key issues include; Litter, waste and packaging, fly tipping/ protection of green belt; loss of habitats and wildlife; central to the protection of our habitats is the Dorset Biodiversity Strategy/ reduce the problem of dog fouling.
- Traffic and Transport – to identify existing formal and informal transport services and programmes to address volumes and speed of traffic; to identify potential need for further developments, to inform community strategies and the Local Transport Plan; a range of sub issues are outlined including the desire to “improve cycle safety and to work on a cycle path – through consultation.
- Youth – to ensure a co-ordinated service provision that is responsive to the needs of young people, by listening and engaging them through active participation and involvement in solutions; key priorities include addressing ‘the lack of appropriate and safe social/ recreational facilities such as skate parks/specific needs of young people should be taken into consideration when choosing the location of new facilities.

The provision of OS,S&R opportunities can potentially have a major bearing in addressing all the above themes set out in the two Community Plans. It will therefore be very important for recommendations and suggested actions arising out of this study to be seen to link back to community plan themes where appropriate.

2.3 Links to the Local Development Plans

The Local Plans give a land use policy-based impetus to the planning and realisation of many OS,S&R opportunities and therefore help to pursue the Community Plan themes:

- Protecting (through designation and policy reference) existing valued spaces and opportunities.
- Ensuring, as far as possible, an appropriate distribution of spaces and opportunities throughout the study area.
- Ensuring that future development contributes towards the maintenance and improvement of OS,S&R opportunities as appropriate.
- Securing contributions from developers of new (especially residential) property for new or improved existing spaces and facilities reflecting the needs of their residents.

The Christchurch Borough Local Plan has several policies of relevance to this study, including:

- **POLICY L 1:** Resists the loss of public and other open spaces.
- **POLICY L 2:** Resists the loss of Playing Fields.
- **POLICY L 12:** Identifies various areas which the Council will seek to secure as public open space.
- **POLICY L 17:** Resists development of undeveloped riversides and Harbour Banks, and seeks to maintain existing and where possible, increase public access.
- **POLICY L 18:** Sets out criteria for the development of boating facilities, moorings and jetties.
- **POLICY L 19:** Resists loss of indoor or outdoor recreation facilities which would have a significant impact on tourism and leisure.
- **POLICY L 20:** States requirement for adequate recreational open space in new residential development and the circumstances and means by which the Council will request contributions from developers

Likewise, the East Dorset Local Plan has the following policies, including:

- **POLICY RODEV9:** Identifies a long distance trailway between Corfe Mullen and the District Boundary.
- **POLICY RCDEV1:** Makes a presumption against the development for other uses of public and private open space.
- **POLICY RCDEV2:** Seeks the provision of new children's play and outdoor sports facilities in association with adopted standards (See Section 5 of this report).
- **POLICY RCDEV3:** Covers situations where it might be appropriate to offer 'off site' provision in respect of RCDEV2.

2.4 Sites of ecological sensitivity

The study area contains large tracts of land that have been recognised and protected because of their ecological/natural significance.

The **Map 2.1: Extent of Ecological and Geomorphological Designations** indicates the extent to which both local authorities are affected by important local, national, and internationally recognised designations. The study area is noted in particular for the extent of internationally renowned Special Protection Areas and Ramsar designations, based largely on the remaining areas of Dorset Heathland.

Such areas, by their nature, attract considerable recreation use and activity which can be damaging to the natural habitats. There is a concern that future new housing development should not generate even greater pressures of this kind.

The **Map 2.2: Special Protection Area and Ramsar Designations with proposed Protection Zones** locates these designations, as well as two protection zones being proposed by local authorities (in conjunction with Natural England). The purpose of the two zones is to enable local authorities to pursue their responsibilities for the protection of the areas under the EC Birds and Habitats Directives, specific provisions of which are applied in the UK by Conservation (Natural Habitats) Regulations 1994, and associated guidance. In summary:

- A primary zone of 0.4 km from such designations, within which there should be a presumption against residential development, because of the additional access and recreational pressures that residents of such development would bring to bear upon such habitats.
- A secondary zone of between 0.4 and 5 km where it is considered that new residential development could still generate recreational pressures, but mitigation measures may allow recreation pressures to be diverted.

These zones are being promoted within 'The Dorset Heathlands Interim Planning Framework 2006-2009. (1st January 2007)' produced by the two Councils, together with Poole, Bournemouth, Dorset County, and Purbeck Councils.

The importance of conserving the remaining heathland habitat, and protecting it from further inappropriate recreation pressures is an important contextual issue for this study.

2.5 The Stakeholders

There is a huge array of agencies and organisations that have an interest in promoting OS,S&R, and all of them can therefore have a bearing on the planning of local open space and recreation opportunities.

The **Figure 2.1: Existing Stakeholders** identifies the public, private and voluntary sector stakeholders who generally have some direct or indirect interest in OS,S&R opportunities. It cannot be guaranteed that everyone or everything has been identified, but it does illustrate the complexity of potential arrangements between all parties.

It is almost impossible to plot the precise relationship of each stakeholder to others in the figure. However, a few observations can safely be made. The stakeholders can generally be broken down into 'Users', 'Providers', 'Funders', and 'Enablers' of OS,S&R opportunities, where:

- 'Users' are basically the participants in OS,S&R, be they individuals or groups.
- 'Providers' can be agencies, organisations and (sometimes) individuals in the public, voluntary and private/commercial sectors largely responsible for establishing and maintaining OS,S&R opportunities.
- 'Funders' are those that provide *financial* support to either create or maintain opportunities, including through grant aid.
- 'Enablers' help in creating and maintaining opportunities either through policy, general nurture and support including advice on technical issues and sources of funding etc.

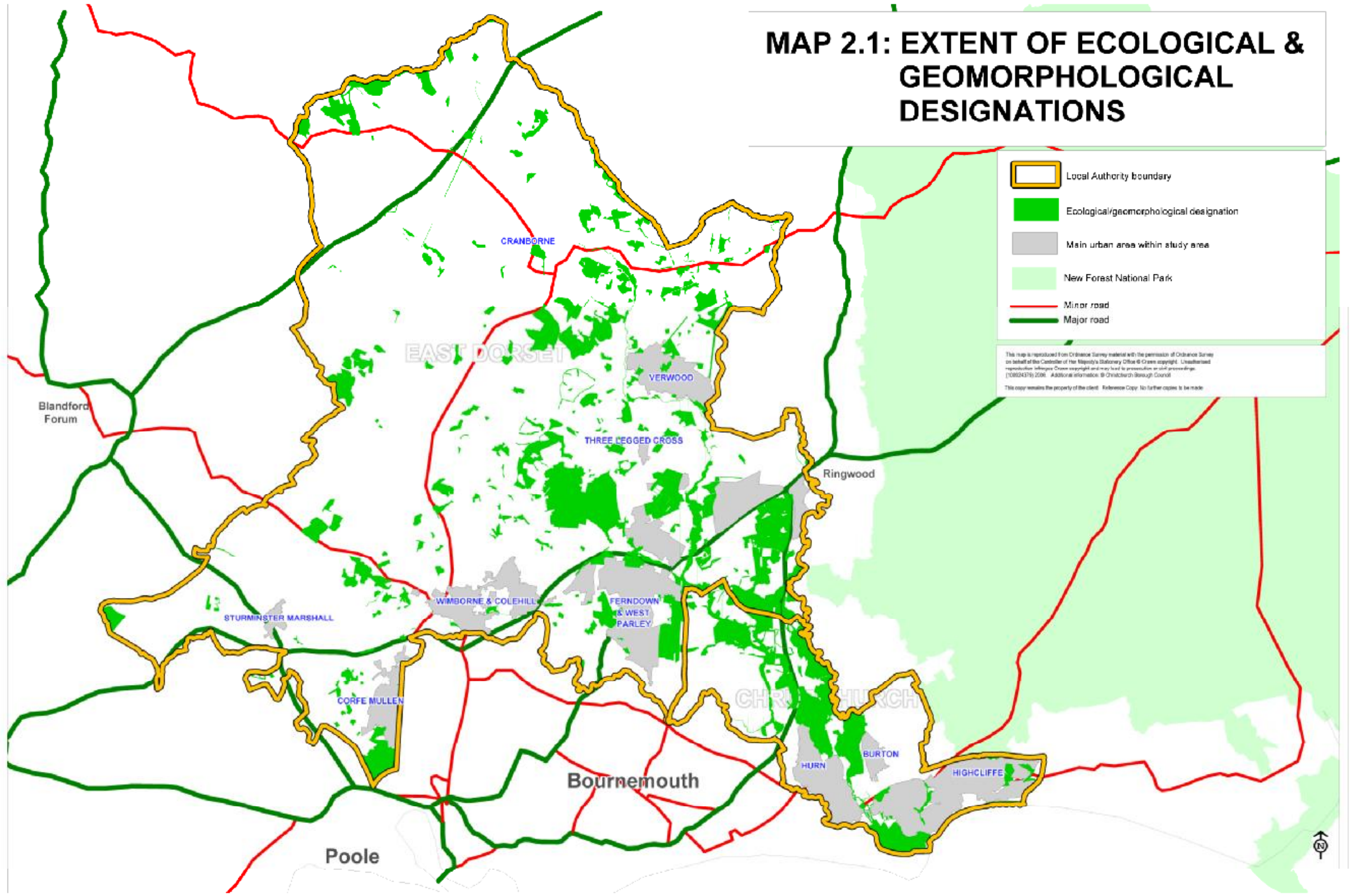
Clearly, some of the stakeholders will fall into more than one category. For example, a club will be a 'User', but potentially also a 'Provider'. The District and Borough Councils may well be 'Providers' in terms of their own facilities, but also 'Funders', and 'Enablers'. The variety of stakeholders ranges from national/central government level, through regional and sub regional interests, down to local interests.

Recommendations within this study and actions identified in the Action Plan will need to be alert to the legitimate roles of the above interests.

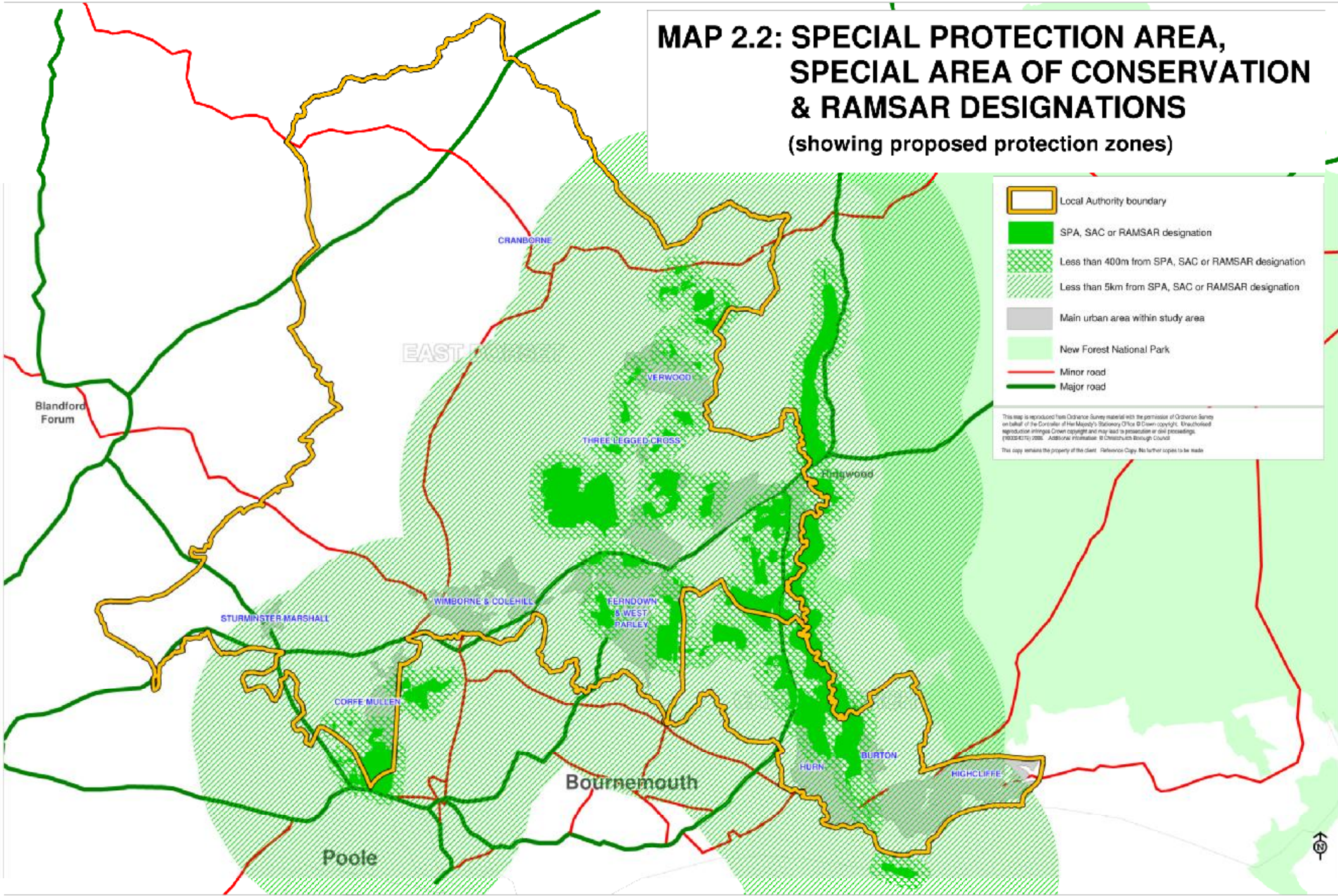
Figure 2.1: Existing Stakeholders

'Users'	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Individuals, groups and clubs
'Providers'	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • County, District and Borough Councils (various departments) • Schools • Youth and play organisations • Local clubs and organisations • Landowners • Commercial providers • Countryside organisations
'Funders'	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Central Government • County, District and Borough Councils • The Lottery • Governing bodies of sport • Charitable trusts and foundations • Environmental trusts • Natural England • Housebuilders • Business • Private Finance Initiatives/Private Public Partnerships • Voluntary fundraising • Other grant sources
'Enablers'	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • County, District and Borough Councils (various departments) • County Sports Network • National Governing Bodies of Sport • Regional Sports Board • Regional Assembly • Regional Development Agency • Government Office for the Region • Department of Communities and Local Government • Department for Culture, Media and Sport • Department for the Environment • Farming and Agriculture • Home Office • Countryside Agency/Natural England • Environment Agency • Community and Voluntary Forum for the Region • Local Environment Partnership • Local Strategic Partnerships

MAP 2.1: EXTENT OF ECOLOGICAL & GEOMORPHOLOGICAL DESIGNATIONS



MAP 2.2: SPECIAL PROTECTION AREA, SPECIAL AREA OF CONSERVATION & RAMSAR DESIGNATIONS (showing proposed protection zones)



	Local Authority boundary
	SPA, SAC or RAMSAR designation
	Less than 400m from SPA, SAC or RAMSAR designation
	Less than 5km from SPA, SAC or RAMSAR designation
	Main urban area within study area
	New Forest National Park
	Minor road
	Major road

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