

## 15 Meeting Local Needs

### Introduction

**15.1** Our basic needs include health, safety and shelter. We also need social cohesion and education. Without the ability to provide for these needs we fail to live successful and meaningful lives. This chapter sets out policies for well planned housing, site location criteria for Gypsies and Travellers and Travelling Showpeople, affordable housing and facilities and services to meet the needs of the local population.

### Housing

**15.2** Housing is the largest urban land use in the area, with over 60,000 homes in Christchurch and East Dorset. There is a significant need for new housing and the following policies address how best to deliver what is required in a form that respects the local area. The number of new homes to be built and the principles of where they should be built are dealt with in the Key Strategy chapter and the area based chapters. This section considers the nature and form that new housing should take.

### Dwelling Size and Type

**15.3** The opportunity to provide new homes is a chance to meet the housing needs of the local community. Evidence suggests that the health and well being of people is directly related to the space in which they live. Over crowded conditions can result in poor health, family conflict, poor educational attainment and anti social behaviour. There are no national living space standards to ensure that new homes are built to avoid these problems. In order to ensure that the new housing built over the lifetime of the plan is fit to last it is important that standards are set.

#### Key Facts

- The average new home built in the UK is the smallest in Europe averaging 15.8 m<sup>2</sup> per room compared with 21.4 m<sup>2</sup> in Germany, 28.2 m<sup>2</sup> in the Netherlands and 26.9 m<sup>2</sup> in France.
- In Europe only the UK, Portugal, Austria and Luxembourg build new homes smaller than existing housing.
- East Dorset has a very high number of large properties with more than 8 habitable rooms, 17% compared to 10.5% in England and 11% throughout the Housing Market Area.
- Christchurch has a higher proportion of medium sized homes with 4 or 5 habitable rooms, 54% compared to 47% in England and 45% in the Housing Market Area.
- East Dorset has a very high proportion of detached dwellings, 60% compared to 45% in the Housing Market Area. Of these 30% are bungalows. In comparison about 40% of Christchurch properties are detached compared to just 24% nationally.
- In contrast only 9.3% of homes in East Dorset are terraced and only 9.9% are flats. For Christchurch the figures are 19% terraced and 19.6% flats in comparison to 27% terraced and 15% flats nationally.

### Relevant Evidence

**15.4** Housing Quality Indicators (HQI) Form (2008) Homes and Communities Agency.

**15.5** Mayor of London: Housing Space Standards (2006).

**15.6** Space standards: the benefits (April 2010), Report prepared by University College London for CABE.

**15.7** Mid Sussex District Council: Housing Space Standards Supplementary Planning Document (2009).

### Policy LN1

Overall, the size and type of new market and affordable dwellings will reflect current and projected local housing needs identified in the latest Strategic Housing Market Assessment and informed by future Annual Monitoring Reports to ensure that the proposed development contributes towards attaining a sustainable and balanced housing market. Individual sites will be expected to reflect the needs of the Strategic Housing Market Assessment, subject to site specific circumstances and the character of the local area.

All new housing will be required to be built to meet minimum living space standards for both internal and external areas. The Councils will produce a Supplementary Planning Document which will set out the detailed requirements of this policy. In the meantime the Councils will apply the Homes and Community Agency Housing Quality Indicators in relation to private open space, unit sizes, unit layout and accessibility within the unit.

### Delivery and Monitoring

**15.8** The policies will be delivered by:

- The development management process.

**15.9** The policies will be monitored by:

- The annual housing completions survey.
- Updates to the Strategic Housing Market Assessment.

### Density of Development

**15.10** It is important to ensure that new housing respects the character of an area, whilst ensuring that the best use is made of land to deliver the quantity of homes required. There is a wide variation in the built character of the area which means it would be inappropriate to impose standard density requirements. The defining features of character areas are described in separate statements and local design studies will continue to inform decisions regarding protection of local character and appropriate design control. Elsewhere there are locations where high densities would be appropriate, reflecting existing character and also placing people in locations with easy access to services, facilities and work.

### Policy LN2

#### Design, layout and density of new housing development

On all sites, the design and layout of new housing development should maximise the density of development to a level which is acceptable for the locality. A minimum density of net 30dph will be encouraged, unless this would conflict with the local character and distinctiveness of an area where a lower density is more appropriate. Proposed housing densities will be informed by the Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment, housing need as set out in the Strategic Housing Market Assessment, the master plan reports for new neighbourhoods and future Annual Monitoring Reports.

Proposals for high density developments will be acceptable in the following types of location where this form of development will not have an adverse impact on the character of the area and where residents have the best access to facilities, services and jobs:

- New greenfield housing sites (density range to be determined by outputs of master planning process).
- Town centres.
- Along the Prime Transport Corridors.
- Areas outside town centres with good access to public transport and essential facilities and services.
- In areas where there is a high level of need for affordable housing or on land already owned by housing associations, or where a housing association is the applicant.

The Councils will carefully consider the design and density of new development in terms of their responsibilities for community safety under Section 17 of the Crime & Disorder Act, and will involve the Police Architectural Liaison Officer in appropriate cases.

### Delivery and Monitoring

**15.11** The policies will be delivered by:

- The development management process.

**15.12** The policies will be monitored by:

- The annual housing completions survey.
- Updates to the Strategic Housing Market Assessment.

### Meeting Affordable Housing Needs

**15.13** The provision of more affordable housing forms part of the Core Strategy Vision and is expressed in Objective 5. Affordable housing definitions are set out in Appendix 2. Not enough affordable housing has been delivered over the past 20 years and this, along with steep house and rental prices has made suitable accommodation inaccessible to many people.

**15.14** A key aim of the Councils' affordable housing strategy is to meet local needs. As a result the Councils will require the allocation of new affordable housing in line with local connection criteria, ensuring that such homes are always prioritised, and in certain cases restricted, to occupation by those in housing need and with connections to the local area.

#### Key Facts

- **East Dorset Statistics**
  - 38,000 dwellings.
  - About 9% are provided by registered social landlords.
  - About 8% are privately rented.
  - 2.3% of dwellings are vacant.
  - Average house price in spring 2011 was £250,000 (Land Registry).
  - Market entry prices in 2011 were approximately £110,000.
  - Housing Register – 2,863 (January 2012).
  - 85 Black & Minority Ethnic applicants.
  - 1502 applicants require 1 bedroom accommodation 175 single applicants aged under 25.

### Key Facts

- Strategic Housing Market Assessment (2011) – Net annual need 430 dwellings.
- Backlog: 395 dwellings – 79 per annum.
- Taking income and savings into account 17% of all households in East Dorset cannot afford housing at current market prices / rents without the need for some form of subsidy (SHMA, 2011).
  
- **Christchurch Statistics**
  - 21,920 dwellings.
  - About 11% are provided by registered social landlords.
  - About 8.6% are privately rented.
  - About 3% are empty.
  
  - Average house price in spring 2011 was £238,000 (Land Registry).
  - Market entry prices in 2011 were approximately £110,000.
  - Housing register 2,025 January (2012).
  - Strategic Housing Market Assessment (2011) – Net annual need 330 dwellings.
  - Backlog: 310 dwellings – 62 per annum.
  - Taking income and savings into account 19.5% of all households in Christchurch cannot afford housing at current market prices / rents without the need for some form of subsidy (SHMA, 2011).

### Relevant Evidence

**15.15** The Bournemouth and Poole Strategic Housing Market Assessment Update 2011 provides the latest information on the level of affordable housing need in the two districts. This has re-emphasised the high level of affordable housing need in the area and justifies policies that seek the highest possible provision, subject to financial viability.

### Policy LN3

#### Provision of affordable housing

In order to maximise the delivery of affordable housing the Councils will require:

All greenfield residential development which results in a net increase of housing is to provide a minimum of 50% of the residential units as affordable housing on the site unless otherwise stated in strategic allocation policies. All other residential development which results in a net increase of housing is to provide a minimum of 40% of the residential units as affordable housing on the site.

A financial contribution provided by the developer will be acceptable on sites of under 5 units where it is not possible to provide affordable housing units on site.

On sites of 5 or more dwellings provision should be on-site but where it is not possible to provide affordable housing units on the site, off-site provision on an alternative site may be acceptable.

If an alternative site is not available, a financial contribution in lieu of provision may be accepted.

Financial contributions should be of equivalent value to on-site provision.

Conditions or legal obligations will be used to ensure that affordable housing is secured and retained for those in housing need and with a local connection.

The mix of units will be subject to negotiation and agreement with the Council but in any event must reflect local housing needs identified in the latest Strategic Housing Market Assessment. Tenure split should normally allow for 30% intermediate housing, with the remainder being affordable rented or social rented.

Any planning application which on financial viability grounds proposes a lower level of affordable housing provision than is required by this policy must be accompanied by clear evidence.

## Exception Sites for the Provision of Affordable Housing

**15.16** The following policy seeks to enable the provision of affordable housing in areas where no significant development is proposed.

### Policy LN4

#### Affordable housing exception sites

Exceptionally land adjoining the defined rural and urban settlements which would otherwise be considered inappropriate for development may be developed in order to provide affordable housing, in perpetuity, provided that:

- The housing comprises 100% affordable housing.
- Secure arrangements are included to ensure that its benefits will be enjoyed by successive as well as initial occupiers.
- The proposed development would provide a mix of housing size and type which meets demonstrated local housing needs as identified in the Strategic Housing Market Assessment.
- The development is small scale and reflects the setting, form and character of the settlement and the surrounding landscape.

This policy will apply to the following settlements:

#### East Dorset

- West Moors; St Leonards and St Ives; Three Legged Cross; Alderholt; Cranborne.
- Furzehill; Gaunts Common; Gussage St Michael; Gussage All Saints; Hinton Martell; Holt.
- Horton; Longham; Shapwick; Sixpenny Handley; Sturminster Marshall; Wimborne St Giles.
- Witchampton; Woodlands.

#### Christchurch

- Land Adjoining the built up area of Christchurch
- Burton; Winkton

## Delivery and Monitoring

**15.17** The policies will be delivered by:

- The development management process.
- A Supplementary Planning Document on the provision of affordable housing.

**15.18** The policies will be monitored by:

- The annual housing completions survey identifying those that are affordable.
- Updates to the Strategic Housing Market Assessment.

## Gypsies, Travellers and Travelling Showpeople

**15.19** The Councils have a statutory responsibility to provide for the needs of Gypsies, Travellers and Travelling Showpeople. The Councils are working with the other authorities in Dorset to produce a Gypsy, Travellers and Travelling Showpeople Sites Development Plan Document. This will identify the required provision of allocated permanent and transit pitches and where suitable sites should be allocated. This Development Plan Document will also consider the accommodation needs of Travelling Showpeople and will seek to identify two plots within the County to meet this need. However, it is necessary for the Core Strategy to provide a general approach as to where the most suitable locations could be identified. This will inform the Development Plan Document and also any relevant planning applications.

### Key Facts

- Dorset County Council estimates a need for 21 residential pitches in East Dorset up to 2028 and 20 in Christchurch.
- Dorset County Council also estimates a need for 20 transit pitches in East Dorset and 16 in Christchurch to 2028.
- Currently there are no transit or residential sites in Christchurch or East Dorset.
- Both areas are subject to unauthorised encampments, especially in the summer months, which in some cases cause nuisance and concern to local residents and damage to the sites involved.

### Relevant Evidence

**15.20** Circular 04/2007 advises that the Core Strategy should set out criteria for the location of travelling showpeople sites which will be used to determine planning applications on unallocated sites that may come forward. Annex C of the Circular sets out good practise for criteria policies.

### Policy LN5

#### Location of sites for gypsy and traveller sites

**The following considerations should be taken into account when determining locations for Gypsy and Traveller sites and Travelling Showpeople sites:**

1. Sites should be located to meet the needs of Gypsy & Traveller communities with a preference for close proximity to existing communities to use services and facilities, including schools, shops, medical facilities and public transport;
2. Sites should provide for adequate on-site facilities for parking, storage, play and residential amenity;
3. Sites should allow for adequate levels of privacy and residential amenity for the occupiers;
4. Sites should not have an unacceptable impact on the amenities of adjacent occupiers; and
5. Sites should not result in a detrimental impact on the natural environment.

**Proposals for sites for Travelling Showpeople will also need to provide adequate space for residential, maintenance and storage uses and be:-**

1. Well related to the public highway network to accommodate the safe passage of large vehicles and pedestrians.
2. Located so as to minimise the impact of on-site business activities on neighbouring properties,
3. Located so as to minimise the visual impact of the uses on the landscape.

## Delivery and Monitoring

**15.21** The policies will be delivered by:

- Dorset-wide Gypsy, Traveller and Travelling Showpeople Site Allocations Development Plan Document.
- The development management process.

**15.22** The policies will be monitored by:

- Gypsy and traveller caravan count data and information on unauthorised encampments..
- Updates to the Strategic Housing Market Assessment.

## Providing Services and Facilities to Serve Local Needs

**15.23** Access to a wide range of services and facilities is an essential requirement for the well being of the community. Provision through the urban areas is, on the whole, good, but the rural areas and parts of the more suburban area are not so well served. Also, there are threats to services and facilities and it is important to enable different ways for these to be provided. It is therefore necessary to ensure that the needs of current and future communities continue to be provided for.

### Key Facts

- A large proportion of the population are above retirement age with 34% in Christchurch and 32% in East Dorset compared to 19% nationally.
- The numbers of elderly are set to increase dramatically over the next 15 years.
- In 2001, about 30% of people in the districts were living alone which may impact on the need for community support, particularly for the pensioner households.
- Overall the health of residents is good with life expectancy figures significantly higher than national figures.
- There are few deprived areas in the districts in comparison to the UK and County. However, Somerford, in Christchurch and Heatherlands in Ferndown are in the most deprived 25% of areas in the Country.
- Crime rates are very low in both districts with parts of East Dorset being the safest in the Country.
- Educational provision is good throughout the districts although new development could put pressure on some facilities in both East Dorset and Christchurch..
- There are a wide range of cultural facilities either in, or within close proximity of the districts, including theatres, cinemas, museums, historic attractions and arts venues.

## Relevant Evidence

**15.24** The Core Strategy Infrastructure Delivery Plan sets out what services and facilities will be required to support the existing and future population. These have been identified in partnership with service providers and utility companies as set out in their Asset Management Plans and Business Plans.

### Policy LN6

#### Community facilities and services

Facilities and services will be provided to support existing and future population growth and changes in the age profile by the following:

New facilities should be concentrated in the settlements of Christchurch, Highcliffe, Burton, Corfe Mullen, Wimborne Minster, Colehill, Ferndown, West Moors, Verwood, Alderholt, Cranborne, Sixpenny Handley, Three Legged Cross and Sturminster Marshall. This is where access can be by public transport, bike and on foot. Some facilities can be provided in smaller settlements in innovative ways such as the provision of health care in the home. Services can also be provided in more innovative ways in suburban areas of Christchurch and East Dorset where access to facilities is more restricted to the car.

The Council will work with partners and service providers to ensure the timely provision of high quality, convenient, local and accessible facilities and services for community and cultural use such as education, health, libraries, facilities for older people / children and young people and community buildings.

Priority will be given to any proposals to allow the multi-use of existing facilities, followed by the expansion of existing, well located facilities to allow for the co-location of facilities and services.

New facilities will be required to serve the needs of the population and new development when the alternatives above are not feasible. Preference will be given to the clustering of services and facilities.

Loss of facilities will be resisted unless it is shown that the facility is no longer needed.

Where appropriate, financial contributions towards the provision of facilities and services will be sought.

## Delivery and Monitoring

**15.25** The policy will be delivered in partnership with service providers, other Councils and community groups.

**15.26** The policy will be monitored using a survey of key facilities and services undertaken every two years.