Basic Conditions Statement

Christchurch Neighbourhood Plan

Prepared by: Dorset Planning Consultant Ltd, on behalf of Christchurch Town Council

Date of report: May 2026

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1. Introduction

When a Neighbourhood Plan is submitted to the Local Planning Authority, it needs to be accompanied by a statement, known as the Basic Conditions Statement, which explains how the neighbourhood development plan as proposed meets the requirements of paragraph 8 of Schedule 4B of the 1990 Act.

This means:

- the legal requirements (as prescribed) have been complied with in connection with the preparation of the Plan;
- the Plan has had appropriate regard to:
  - national policies and advice contained in guidance issued by the Secretary of State,
  - the need for mitigation of, and adaptation to, climate change, and
  - the local nature recovery strategy for the area;
- the making of the Plan does not result in the development plan for the area proposing less housing is provided;
- the Plan will contribute to the achievement of sustainable development, and would not breach, and is otherwise compatible with, retained EU obligations and the requirements of Chapter 8 of Part 6 of the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017.

2. A summary of the Plan and reasons why it should be made in the proposed terms

This is the first Neighbourhood Plan for the parish of Christchurch. It has been prepared by local residents, shaped by feedback from the local community, with technical input from a range of planning and other experts, on behalf of the Town Council. When finalised, it will have the official status of being part of the "development plan" for the area, to be used in determining planning applications.

The Regulation 14 Pre-Submission version of the Plan contained 19 policies, and the Submission version contains 18 policies (following the removal of policy 7 dealing with protected Habitat sites). These are group under five theme areas, whose objectives and policy elements are:

- *DESIGN AND HERITAGE* - creating better buildings through design and preserving and respecting the area's historic character and important views. This is achieved through policies covering:
  - Principles for Good Design
  - Shopfront Design
  - Locally Important Historic Buildings
  - Locally Important Views
- *GREEN AND OPEN SPACES* - enhancing and expanding our local green spaces, wildlife areas and tree cover. This is achieved through policies covering:
  - Locally Important Green Spaces
  - Opportunities for Wildlife
- *GETTING ABOUT* - improving opportunities for walking and cycling and the way traffic flows are managed. This is achieved through policies covering:
  - Opportunities for Walking and Cycling
  - Design and Layout of Streets and Spaces
  - Managing Parking Requirements
- *TOWN CENTRE, SHOPS AND SERVICES* - supporting the town centre and our local community facilities. This is achieved through policies covering:
  - The Town Centre Strategy
  - Town Centre Car Park Capacity
- *PLACE-MAKING* - identifying where and how areas may change for the better and providing guidance on how these changes can reflect local needs and aspirations. This is achieved through policies covering:
  - Meeting Local Housing and Employment Needs
  - Potential Development Sites (6 sites identified and detailed policies proposed).

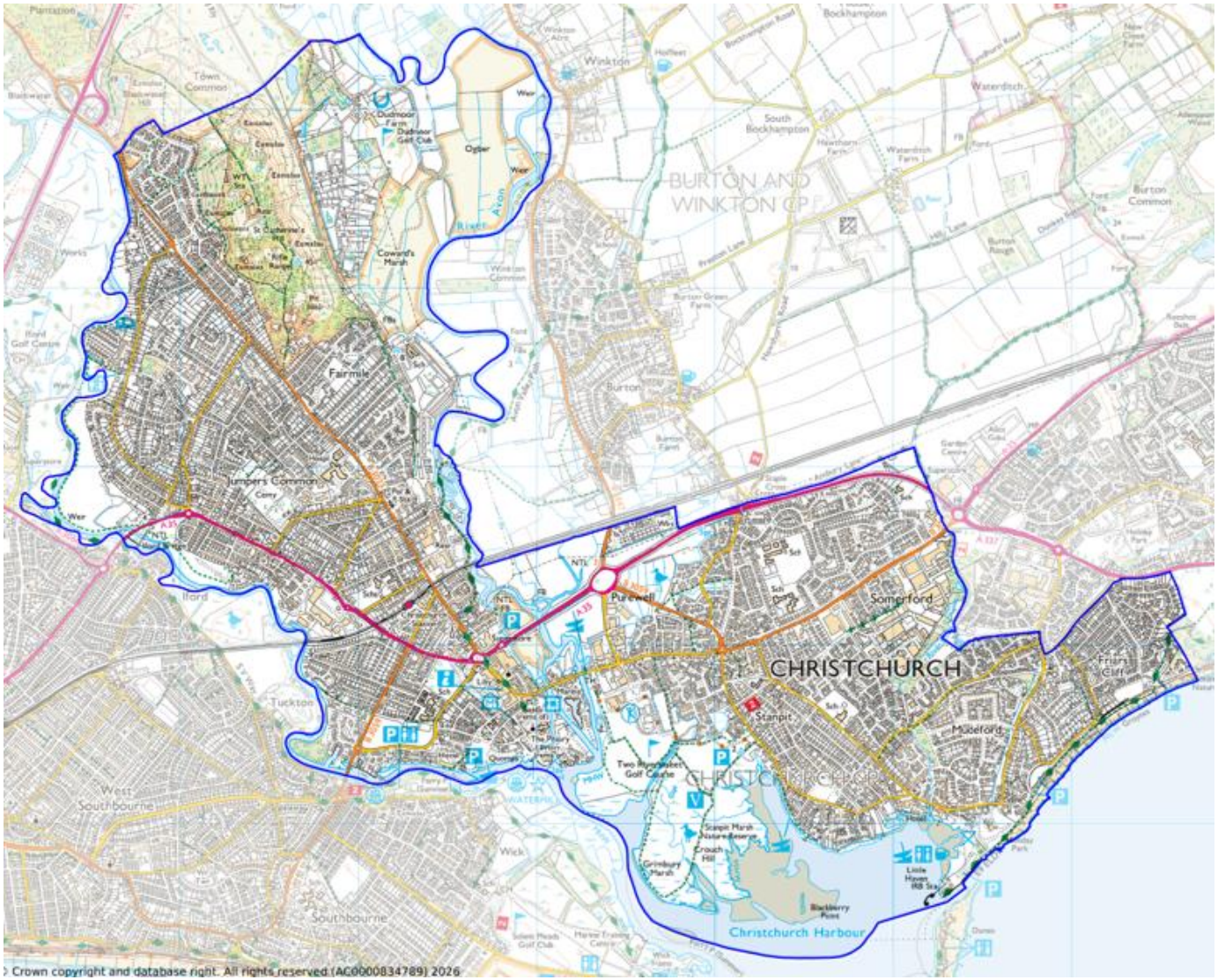
3. General Legal Requirements

Has the Neighbourhood Plan been submitted by a qualifying body?

The Neighbourhood Plan has been prepared and submitted for examination by Christchurch Town Council, which is the qualifying body.

The Neighbourhood Plan Area was designated by Bournemouth, Christchurch and Poole Council on 7 January 2021[1]. Minor changes are due to be made to the parish but these are scheduled to take effect from 1 April 2027.

Map 1 – Neighbourhood Plan Designated Area



[1] Decision recorded on BCP Council website https://democracy.bcpcouncil.gov.uk/documents/s22853/Officer%20Decision%20Record.pdf

Is what is being proposed relate to the development and use of land or sites in the Neighbourhood Plan Area?

The Neighbourhood Plan relates to planning matters (the use and development of land) and its policies relate only to the designated Neighbourhood Plan area or parts thereof.

Do any of the policies extend beyond the Neighbourhood Plan Area or cover an area where there is a Neighbourhood Plan already in place?

The Neighbourhood Plan policies relate only to Christchurch Town Council area (which is the designated Neighbourhood Plan Area) and to no other area.

Do any of the policies relate to excluded development?

The Neighbourhood Plan policies do not deal with county matters (mineral extraction and waste development), nationally significant infrastructure or other strategic / significant development that falls within Annex 1 to Council Directive 85/337/EEC.

Does the proposed Neighbourhood Plan state the period for which it is to have effect?

The Neighbourhood Plan makes clear in the introduction that the plan period will run from 2024 to 2034.

Was the Neighbourhood Plan consulted on as per the requirements in Part 5 Section 14 of Neighbourhood Planning Regulations?

The consultation formally ran over eight weeks, from 24 November 2025 to 25 January 2026. It was widely publicised, in a manner that was considered likely to bring it to the attention of people who live, work or carry on business in the neighbourhood area. This included:

i. Announcement of publication of Draft Plan and details of consultation period and how to respond were posted on the Town Council Neighbourhood Plan website and social media

ii. The draft plan was featured in late November / early December editions of the Christchurch Eye magazine[2] and New Milton Advertiser

iii. Newsletters about the consultation were distributed to all premises in the area via Royal Mail delivery and community delivery networks

iv. Posters were displayed at key community locations, including Christchurch Library, the Tourist Information Centre and the Red House Museum

v. Emails were sent to the statutory consultees

vi. Copies of the draft Neighbourhood Plan were made available to read at Christchurch Library, Community Halls, Red House Museum, Regent Centre/Tourist Information Centre

vii. Three drop-in sessions were advertised as part of the consultation to provide an opportunity for people to learn more about the Plan, ask questions, share your comments and complete a hard copy of the consultation. These were held in January in three venues to aid accessibility: Hall on the Hill; Somerford ARC and Christchurch Library.

Respondents were encouraged to complete a response form (either online or paper copies) which were processed via Survey Monkey software. Further details on how the consultation was run are set out in the accompanying Consultation Statement.

The following statutory consultees were consulted, as per the list provided in paragraph 1 of Schedule 1 and taking into account whether their interests may be affected by the Neighbourhood Plan. Additional respondents (as asterisked) were added later in the consultation period and provided with an extended timescale to respond to allow them the full 6 week period.

[2] https://digital.magmanager.co.uk/Reader/Index/2731215#page/16

Potential consultee	Considered as potential interest
Mayor of London	n/a
Local planning authority, county council or parish council any part of whose area is in or adjoins the area	BCP Council, and New Forest District and Hampshire County Councils (as adjoining Local Planning Authorities) Parish / Town Councils covering: – Burton and Winkton – Highcliffe and Walkford – Hurn – Sopley.
Coal Authority	n/a
Homes and Communities Agency	Homes England
Natural England	Natural England
Environment Agency	Environment Agency
Historic England	Historic England
Network Rail Infrastructure Limited	Network Rail Town Planning Team (Southern Region & Wessex Asset Protection Team)
Strategic highways company any part of whose area is in or adjoins the area	Highways England
Marine Management Organisation	Marine Management Organization* (Marine Planning Team and MMO South Team (Compliance & Control))
Electronic communications providers	Mobile Operators Association, Openreach, Vodafone and O2, BT (inc EE), Three
Health Service providers	Public Health (Dorset), Dorset HealthCare, Royal Bournemouth & Christchurch Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust, NHS Dorset (Integrated Care Board)* and NHS England*
Electricity or Gas Infrastructure Providers	Scottish & Southern Electricity and Southern Gas Network
Water or Sewerage undertakers	Bournemouth Water and Wessex Water
Voluntary bodies some or all of whose activities benefit all or any part of the neighbourhood area	Various – see consultation statement
Bodies which represent the interests of different racial, ethnic or national groups; different religious groups; persons carrying on business in the area; and disabled persons in the area.	Various – see consultation statement

Have any requirements imposed in relation to the order by or under Part 6 of the Levelling-up and Regeneration Act 2023 (environmental outcomes reports) have been complied with?

This clause was introduced in March 2026 through the Levelling-up and Regeneration Act 2023. The regulations setting out the requirements for environmental outcomes reports have not yet been brought forward.

4. Consideration of the Plan's impact on housing delivery in relation to the adopted development plan

This new basic condition (introduced March 2026) is similar to National Planning policy (paragraph 30) which states "Neighbourhood Plans should not promote

less development than set out in the strategic policies for the area, or undermine those strategic policies."

The Development Plan for the Neighbourhood Plan area

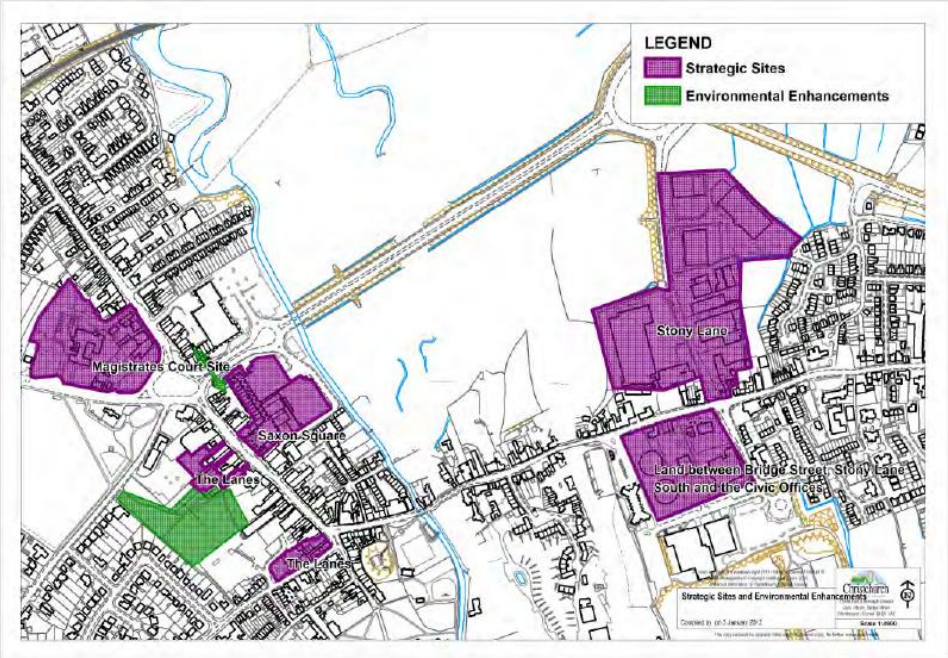
The Christchurch and East Dorset Local Plan- Part 1 Core Strategy[3], which was adopted by Christchurch Borough Council in April 2014, contains the bulk of the strategic planning policies for the area. There are a number of 'saved' policies from the 2001 Christchurch Local Plan but these are generally non-strategic in nature as they were not carried forward into the Core Strategy. There are also a number of supplementary planning documents which do not have development plan status. An extract from the Christchurch and East Dorset Local Plan- Part 1 Core Strategy Policies Map is appended.

The current development plan does not set a specific housing target for the Christchurch Neighbourhood Plan area. Policy KS4 deals with housing provision in Christchurch and East Dorset (the former Local Planning Authority Areas) and sought to deliver about 8,490 new homes between 2013 and 2028, comprising about 5,000 homes within the existing urban areas and a further 3,465 provided as new neighbourhoods at Christchurch, Burton, Corfe Mullen, Wimborne/Colehill, Ferndown/West Parley and Verwood.

The policy therefore anticipated infill (windfall) development within the built-up urban area, including the following strategic sites identified as playing a pivotal role in delivering the Town Centre Vision and Key Strategy under Policy CH1:

- The Magistrates' Court Site
- Saxon Square
- The Lanes (comprising the area between Sopers Lane and Wick Lane)
- Land between Bridge Street, Stony Lane South and the Civic Offices
- Stony Lane.

The policy anticipates that these sites would be brought forward in accordance with site specific allocations in a Site Allocations Development Plan Document, although this was never progressed. It refers to allowing high density residential development as part of a balanced, mixed use environment for those sites outside areas affected by high flood risk. No specific quantum of development is set through the policy or referenced in the supporting text.

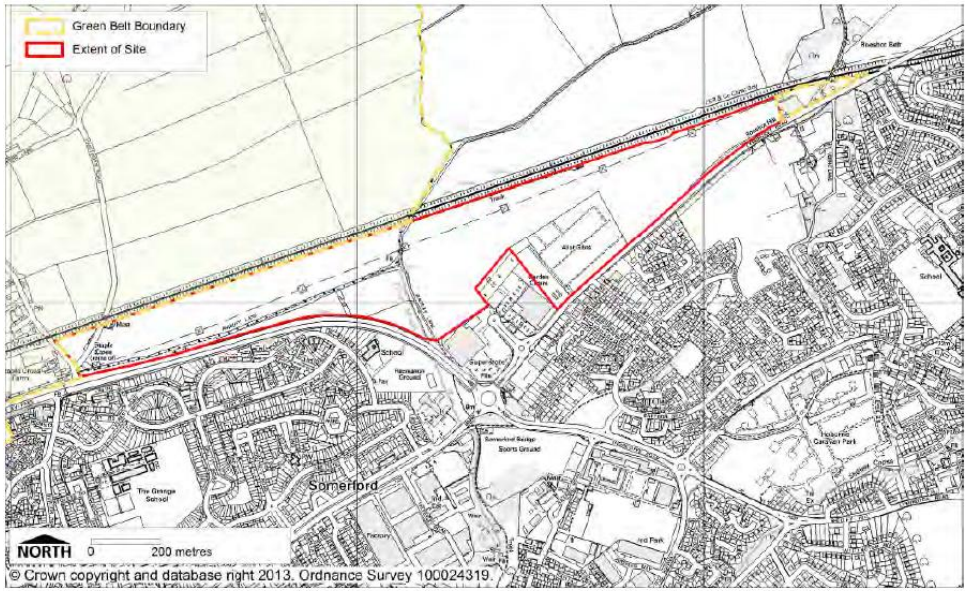


Map 5.1 Strategic Sites and Environmental Enhancements

Policy CN1 refers to the Christchurch Urban Extension, which is located on land south of the railway line to the east of Salisbury Road, extending east as far as

[3] https://www.bcpcouncil.gov.uk/Planning-and-building-control/Planning-policy/Current-Local-Plans/Christchurch/docs/christchurch-and-east-dorset-adopted-core-strategy.pdf

the former borough boundary at Roeshot. This area was expected to deliver about 950 dwellings. This site spans three separate Neighrbouhood Plan areas.



Map 6.1 Christchurch Urban Extension

No other specific site allocations were made within the adopted Local Plan in relation to the Christchurch Neighbourhood Plan area.

Would the plan have the effect of preventing development from taking place which is proposed in the development plan and would provide housing?

The Neighbourhood Plan supports the continuation of infill development within the built-up area. In terms of the sites that are specifically proposed in the development plan, these are considered in turn below:

- **The Magistrates' Court Site** – already has planning permission and its construction is in progress.
- **Saxon Square** – the Neighbourhood Plan simply seeks to safeguard the town centre parking provision, and would not prevent this site from being developed. This is reflected in Policy CH1 which states "The Council will ensure that adequate parking levels are maintained within the Town Centre so as not to adversely affect vitality and viability" It is not clear whether there was any expectation that this site would include further residential development.
- **The Lanes** – the Local Plan Policy CH1 envisages the redevelopment of the Lanes would provide an opportunity for environmental enhancements by encouraging mixed used development, including residential, retail and community uses. Similarly to Saxon Square, the Neighbourhood Plan simply seeks to safeguard the town centre parking provision, and would not prevent this area from being developed.
- **Land between Bridge Street, Stony Lane South and the Civic Offices** – has been partly redeveloped, and the majority of the site now has planning permission. The corner site (Priory Lodge) was developed for sheltered housing apartments in 2014. The former gas works site has recently been granted planning permission which included 177 open market, affordable and retirement living apartments. The Neighbourhood Plan does not include any policies that would prevent the remaining parts of this area from being developed.
- **Stony Lane** – is currently in employment use, with the area to the west of Stony Lane continuing to be promoted through the 2025 Call for Sites. The Neighbourhood Plan does not include any policies that would prevent development of this area.
- **Christchurch Urban Extension** – was granted outline permission in 2019. The development is being brought forward in phases, and a detailed planning application for the first phase (on land to the eastern side of the site) submitted in March 2023 . The phasing plan indicates the western zone (including land in Christchurch) as the final phase.

The Neighbourhood Plan identifies additional sites for housing development that were not included in the adopted development plan. This includes:

- LAND AT STOUR ROAD - a 0.27 hectare site that is estimated could deliver about 20 homes
- AVON TRADING PARK FRONTAGE - a 0.37 hectare site that is estimated could deliver about 20 homes

- LAND AT 43 TO 47 BARRACK ROAD - a 0.35 hectare site
- THE FORMER CIVIC CENTRE SITE – subject to the retention of town centre parking and satisfying the sequential and exception tests for flooding (as may be appropriate) under national planning policy
- QUEENSMEAD, FAIRMILE ROAD - a 0.6 hectare site that is estimated could deliver about 20 homes, or 30 extra care bed spaces
- CHRISTCHURCH HOSPITAL - and potentially additional land off Tasman Close, which altogether is estimated could deliver about 160 homes including key worker homes, care or extra care uses

On this basis, it is considered that the making of the draft plan would not result in the development plan for this area proposing less housing than if the draft plan were not to be made.

5. Consideration of the Plan's contribution to mitigating and adaption to climate change

National planning policy suggests that plans "should take a proactive approach to mitigating and adapting to climate change, taking into account the long-term implications for flood risk, coastal change, water supply, biodiversity and landscapes, and the risk of overheating and drought from rising temperatures. Policies should support appropriate measures to ensure the future health and resilience of communities and infrastructure to climate change impacts, such as providing space for physical protection measures, or making provision for the possible future relocation of vulnerable development and infrastructure."

Climate change has been considered through the preparation of the Neighbourhood Plan, including the Strategic Environmental Assessment process. This 'scoped in' climate change as a consideration, having reviewed the various plans and strategic and data in relation to the Christchurch Area. Its noted:

"Climate change is a matter of international concern, and the UK Government has committed to transitioning to a net-zero economy, in order to reduce the country's carbon emissions, as a key action to address the main cause of climate change. It also recognizes the need to mitigate the expected impacts in terms of temperatures, rainfall and extreme weather events.

"Significant areas of the Neighbourhood Plan area are impacted by flooding and coastal erosion, and it will therefore be important to have regard to national planning policy on avoiding and mitigating flood risk."

The resulting SEA objectives on this theme were:

- To support the resilience of the Neighbourhood Plan area to the potential effects of climate change, including flooding and coastal erosion
- To reduce the contribution to climate change made by activities in the area
- To promote sustainable transport use and reduce the need to travel

Overall, the Regulation 14 draft plan scored positively in relation to this theme, particularly with regard to promoting sustainable transport use and reduce the need to travel. The ability to reduce the contribution to climate change made by activities in the area was least impacted by the Neighbourhood Plan policies primarily due to the avoidance of overlap with existing policies (for example, Local Plan policies ME3 and ME4, national planning policy and requirements set in building regulations). Policy 1. Principles for Good Design, scored positively across all three objectives, as it requires developers to have regard to the design issues including matters relating to the selection of materials that are inherently sustainable, reducing the need for energy by designing for solar gain, using high standards of insulation, and encouraging on-site energy production, as well as improving the connectivity and attractiveness of pedestrian and cycle routes.

The only policies that were considered to have a potential (non-significant) adverse impact were

- Policy 3 on the protection of Locally Important Historic Buildings – on the basis that the retention of historic buildings is unlikely to maximise opportunities for water recycling. However this is to some extent off-set by the 'saving' in embodied carbon from re-using an existing building.
- Policy 5 on Locally Important Green Spaces – as this policy is likely to prevent the use of the designated green spaces for wind or solar renewable energy generation due to the landscape impact, although the impact of this is limited in extent given the built-up nature of the area (for wind generation) and would not prevent the incorporation solar panels on any existing buildings within these spaces.

- Policy 12 on Town Centre Car Park Capacity - supports the continued use of the car, and as such is scored negatively, however it is unlikely to prevent the car parks from including EV charging points or additional cycle parking to reflect changing demand.
- Policy 17 on the Former Civic Offices Site and adjoining car parks site is within an area at risk of flooding – and the policy recognises that this risk would need to be addressed in line with national policy if development is to proceed.

6. Consideration of the Local Nature Recovery Strategy

Dorset's Local Nature Recovery Strategy was produced in December 2025, and as such had not been available to inform the Regulation 14 draft plan Neighbourhood Plan.

The Local Nature Recovery Strategy does not specifically reference Christchurch, but the three layers that comprise the mapped elements of the strategy (appended and linked here) indicate both existing designations (nature areas of national important), high opportunity nature areas and potential activities.

Priority 7 which is relevant for urban areas is to "have increased nature-rich spaces, so wildlife can travel between buildings, roads, parks, gardens and the wider countryside." A range of potential activities are included in the strategy, which include:

- Increase tree canopy cover by establishing and maintaining more trees in gardens, parks, and along streets
- In new developments, keep as many existing trees on site as possible and if trees are lost, carry out new tree planting, with numbers greater than those removed. Favour local and native species, or new species that provide a similar ecological function if more resilient or suited to the urban environment
- Increase the use of hedges, rather than just fences and walls, as boundary treatments
- Create sustainable drainage systems (SuDS) features such as rain gardens, swales, street trees and ponds to slow water and provide wetland or boggy habitat
- Use permeable materials if creating hard surfaces
- Use water butts to catch rainwater
- Include species enhancements in the design of new buildings and developments, such as bird and bat boxes/bricks, bee bricks, and hedgehog highways
- Protect and enhance green corridors that connect up nature areas to help wildlife travel through towns

Many of the above elements already featured in the Regulation 14 Neighbourhood Plan (in particular the design prompts guidance for nature and green spaces references in Policy 1, alongside Policy 5 and 6 on green spaces and opportunities for wildlife).

The Town Council's Neighbourhood Plan Consultant has taken this opportunity to reach out to the Local Nature Recovery Officer at Dorset Council, who has advised that they are looking to develop specific guidance for those preparing Neighbourhood Plans on how to meet the updated requirements and how they can use the LNRS as a tool to help prepare their plan. In the meantime, they would suggest the following reference is included in the plan:

"Dorset local nature recovery strategy has 13 nature recovery priorities which can be used to inform site design, and it's local habitat map identifies high opportunity nature areas, with mapped potential activities suggesting what type of habitat creation or enhancement could be most beneficial in an area, which can guide Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) delivery."

The submission version of the Plan now includes this information within the supporting text to Policy 6 on opportunities for wildlife and the policy references the high opportunity nature areas identified through the Dorset Local Nature Recovery Strategy for securing BNG measures.

The LNRS webpage https://www.dorsetcouncil.gov.uk/w/how-the-dorset-local-nature-recovery-strategy-will-work-with-planning-policy-1 explains that high opportunity nature areas do not prevent development but can highlight the importance of considering the nature recovery activities that can be delivered as part of site design, using both the potential activities map layer and the

potential activities in the written part of the strategy (in particular those under Priority 7 - urban).

Whilst it was not possible to take account of the local nature recovery strategy in the preparation of the Regulation 14 version of the Neighbourhood Plan, the Town Council are satisfied that there are no clear conflicts with the strategy. The car park area to the south side of the Former Civic Offices Site (Policy 17) is partially within a high opportunity nature area where the primary activity would be to create or enhance grassland or wood pasture habitat. **The supporting text in the submission version of the Plan makes reference to this potential.**

7. Consideration of National Planning Policies and Guidance

The Neighbourhood Plan must have regard to national policy and guidance from the Secretary of State.

National Planning Policy and Guidance

National planning guidance comes primarily from the published National Planning Policy Framework (last updated December 2024), but where appropriate, reference is made to the online National Planning Policy Guidance (NPPG) and Ministerial Statements.

Conformity Analysis

The most relevant national and local plan policies for each section of the plan, and how the policies relate to these, are summarised below:

National Policy: key statements (NPPF paragraph)	Neighbourhood Plan Policies – Conformity Assessment
Section 3: Design and Heritage	
132. Plans should, at the most appropriate level, set out a clear design vision and expectations, so that applicants have as much certainty as possible about what is likely to be acceptable. Design policies should be developed with local communities so they reflect local aspirations, and grounded in an understanding and evaluation of each area's defining characteristics. Neighbourhood planning groups can play an important role in identifying the special qualities of each area and explaining how this should be reflected in development. **135.** Requires planning policies and decisions to ensure that developments are sympathetic to local character and history, including the surrounding built environment and landscape setting, establish or maintain a strong sense of place, using the arrangement of streets, spaces, building types and materials to create attractive, welcoming and distinctive places to live, work and visit, and sustain an appropriate amount and mix of development including green and other public space, and to create places that are safe, inclusive and accessible. **139**. Development that is not well designed should be refused, especially where it fails to reflect local design policies and government guidance on design, taking into account any local design guidance. Conversely, significant weight should be given to: development which reflects local design policies and government guidance on design; and/or outstanding or innovative designs which promote high levels of sustainability, or help raise the standard of design more generally in an area, so long as they fit in with the overall form and layout of their surroundings. **NPPG ID: 26-001-20191001, 26-004-20191001 and 26-005-20191001** notes that the National Design Guide can be used by all those involved in shaping places including in plan-making and decision making, and that neighbourhood plan-making is one of the key ways in which local character and design objectives can be understood. Local design guides should be informed by the 10 important characteristics of good places set out in the National Design Guide, and need to be shaped by a clear understanding of the local area's qualities and opportunities.	**Policies 1 and 2** deal with overarching principles for design and shopfront design (within the Town Centre). These both seek to ensure that development respects and reinforces the local character of the area, drawing on the appraisal work undertaken as part of the Design Code and the Town Centre. The design guidance covers both good practice and seeks to address common design issues noted. Area-specific analysis is provided. Both policies have had regard to national planning policy, were developed in consultation with the local community, and are grounded in an understanding and evaluation of each area's defining characteristics. **Policy 3** highlights the importance of local buildings which are likely to merit non-designated heritage asset status. The reasons for their importance are set out in Appendix 3. The policy relies on the approach for considered such heritage assets as set out in national planning policy, and as such no obvious conformity issues identified. **Policy 4** recognises the importance of the Priory, the character of the coastline, harbour and banks of the River Stour and Avon, and wider local views in contributing to the defining characteristics and identify of the area. This is in broad alignment with the national policies on design. The views are all from public areas and are therefore a legitimate material consideration as being in the wider public interest.

National Policy: key statements (NPPF paragraph)	Neighbourhood Plan Policies – Conformity Assessment
216. In weighing applications that directly or indirectly affect non-designated heritage assets, a balanced judgement will be required having regard to the scale of any harm or loss and the significance of the heritage asset.. **NPPG ID: 18a-040-20190723** There are a number of processes through which non-designated heritage assets may be identified, including neighbourhood plan-making. Irrespective of how they are identified, it is important that the decisions to identify them as non-designated heritage assets are based on sound evidence, and that all non-designated heritage assets are clearly identified as such.	
Section 4: Green and Open Spaces	
106. The designation of land as Local Green Space through local and neighbourhood plans allows communities to identify and protect green areas of particular importance to them. **107.** Local Green Space designation should only be used where the green space is: a) in reasonably close proximity to the community it serves; b) demonstrably special to a local community and holds a particular local significance; and c) local in character and is not an extensive tract of land. **108.** Policies for managing development within a Local Green Space should be consistent with national policy for Green Belts, excluding provisions relating to grey belt and previously developed land. **NPPG ID: 37-010-20140306** If land is already protected by Green Belt policy, then consideration should be given to whether any additional local benefit would be gained by designation as Local Green Space. One such benefit may be where there could be exceptions that would allow development, and LGS designation helps to identify areas that are of particular importance to the local community. **135.** Requires planning policies and decisions to ensure that developments are sympathetic to local character and history, including the surrounding built environment and landscape setting, establish or maintain a strong sense of place, and sustain an appropriate amount and mix of development including green and other public space. **187.** Planning policies and decisions should contribute to and enhance the natural and local environment. This includes by protecting and enhancing valued landscapes and recognising the intrinsic character and beauty of the countryside, and the wider benefits from natural capital and ecosystem services, and minimising impacts on and providing net	**Policy 5** designates areas of Local Green Space (LGS), identifies other important green spaces (verges and strips) that also make a valuable contribution to the character and amenity of an area, and provides guidance on possible enhancements to green spaces reflecting the vision for the area. All of the proposed LGS are considered to be local in character, well-related to the settlement, and the reason for designation (as set out in Appendix 5) provides the reasoning for these spaces being both special to the local community and of local significance. Whilst a number of sites are covered by other designations, the overlap has been considered and the LGS designation considered to be justified for the reasons given in the supporting paper. The policy wording adopted for the LGS is based on similar wording in other recently made NPs which has been considered to be consistent with Green Belt policy, and as such regard has been given to national policy and guidance. In addition to these spaces, the policy also identifies other green spaces such as verges and strips that are deemed important to the character of the area. These are not given the same level of protection as LGS, but are to be considered in terms of their contribution to local character and amenity, and opportunities for enhancement. **Policy 6** seeks to identify opportunities for biodiversity enhancement, including the network of existing and proposed green corridors / stepping stones, and proposals to secure the retention. mitigation or compensation for loss of mature native trees. This aligns with national

National Policy: key statements (NPPF paragraph)	Neighbourhood Plan Policies – Conformity Assessment
gains for biodiversity. **192.** To protect and enhance biodiversity, plans should identify, map and safeguard components of local wildlife-rich habitats and wider ecological networks, including wildlife corridors and stepping stones. **195.** The presumption in favour of sustainable development does not apply a plan is likely to have a significant effect on a habitats site (either alone or in combination with other plans or projects), unless an appropriate assessment has concluded that the plan or project will not adversely affect the integrity of the habitats site.	planning policy on protecting and enhancing biodiversity and ensuring developments are sympathetic to local character. *Policy 7 in the Pre-Submission draft was initially considered necessary to ensure the protection of internationally protected Habitat sites, given that the approach to addressing these sites was not fully understood at the time the current Local Plan policies were adopted However it has been deleted on the advice of BCP Council and Natural England, as the protection and related mitigation measures are considered to be sufficiently addressed through existing legislation and procedures adopted by BCP Council.*
Section 5. Getting About	
109. Transport should be considered from the earliest stages of plan-making , using a vision-led approach to identify transport solutions that deliver well-designed, sustainable and popular places. This should involve ensuring patterns of movement, streets, parking and other transport considerations are integral to the design of schemes, and contribute to making high quality places; identifying and pursuing opportunities to promote walking, cycling and public transport use, taking into account the environmental impacts of traffic and transport infrastructure. **111.** Planning policies should support an appropriate mix of uses across an area, to minimise the number and length of journeys needed for employment, shopping, leisure, education and other activities, and provide for attractive and well-designed walking and cycling networks, drawing on Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plans. **112.** If setting local parking standards for residential and non-residential development, policies should take into account: a) the accessibility of the development; b) the type, mix and use of development; c) the availability of and opportunities for public transport; d) local car ownership levels; and e) the need to ensure an adequate provision of spaces for charging plug-in and other ultra-low emission vehicles.	**Policy 7** identifies the town centre, railway station and main trip generators (public recreation areas, shops and local community facilities, employment areas and local schools) as critical in determining the adequacy of connecting routes, and potential solutions identified through the Christchurch Walking and Cycling Study, which has been based on the Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan for the area. **Policy 8** identifies important elements in the design of streets and spaces in larger scale developments (where such opportunities may arise). This similarly draws on the Christchurch Walking and Cycling Study, and seeks to ensure that the resulting design contributes to making high quality places; identifying and pursuing opportunities to promote walking, cycling and public transport use, in line with national policy. **Policy 9** refers to the starting point for the consideration of car parking provision will be the BCP Council Parking Standards SPD, which has been drawn up with regard to national planning policy. The Neighbourhood Plan policy also highlights typical car ownership levels for this area, and the importance of visitor parking for the beach (including areas less well served by public transport), and the need to take this into account in areas of on-street parking stress.

National Policy: key statements (NPPF paragraph)	Neighbourhood Plan Policies – Conformity Assessment
Section 6: Town Centre, Shops and Services	
90. Planning policies and decisions should support the role that town centres play at the heart of local communities, by taking a positive approach to their growth, management and adaptation. Planning policies should: promote their long-term vitality and viability – by allowing them to grow and diversify in a way that reflects their distinctive character; set out the range of uses permitted in such locations as part of a positive strategy for the future of each centre; support markets; and recognise that residential development often plays an important role in ensuring the vitality of centres. **113.** In town centres, local authorities should seek to improve the quality of parking so that it is convenient, safe and secure, alongside measures to promote accessibility for pedestrians and cyclists.	**Policy 10** provides and updated strategy for the Town Centre areas, drawing on a wide range of evidence. The Town's Chamber of Trade and Commerce has been represented on the Neighbourhood Plan steering group, to ensure that the needs of local businesses are heard. The policy supports change and growth that will sustain a suitable mix of uses (including housing) and public spaces in keeping with the town's distinctive character, and addresses the main issues that have been highlighted as issues and opportunities. **Policy 11** seeks to protect the town centre car parks which are considered integral to the vitality of the town, both in accommodating visitors and workers. Reference is included to enabling improvements to the quality of parking, having regard to national planning policy.
Section 7: Place-making	
61-63. It is important that a sufficient amount and variety of land can come forward where it is needed, that the needs of groups with specific housing requirements are addressed. The overall aim should be to meet an area's identified housing need. Within the context of establishing need, the size, type and tenure of housing needed for different groups in the community should be assessed and reflected in planning policies. **NPPG ID: 41-040-20160211** where neighbourhood plans contain policies on housing supply, these should take account of latest and up-to-date evidence of housing need. **69-70.** Where strategic policies do not set out a housing requirement for designated neighbourhood area, the local planning authority should provide an indicative figure, if requested to do so by the neighbourhood planning body. **85.** Planning policies and decisions should help create the conditions in which businesses can invest, expand and adapt. Significant weight should be placed on the need to support economic growth and productivity, taking into account both local business needs and wider opportunities for development. **98.** To provide the social, recreational and cultural facilities and services the community needs, planning policies and decisions should plan positively for the provision and use of shared spaces, community facilities and other local services to enhance the sustainability	**Policy 12** sets out the overall strategy to meeting local housing and employment needs in the Neighbourhood Plan area. It does not seek to set a housing target (and no such target is included in the adopted Local Plan), but for information the supporting text provides information on the indicative target as suggested by BCP Council until such time as the Local Plan is further advanced. Given the potentially high housing need, the Neighbourhood Plan does not look to restrict housing delivery, but instead focuses on ensuring that it is supported by the necessary infrastructure and employment opportunities to create healthy and robust places, and to meet the housing needs of the community in terms of housing mix. This is supported by evidence from local housing needs assessments and also information from the Chamber of Trade and Commerce. **Policies 13 – 18** provide more detailed guidance for the main development sites identified. The majority of these had been identified for inclusion within the emerging Local Plan, and have been tested as part of the Strategic Environmental Assessment process in relation to potential significant environment effects. The criteria for each site draws

National Policy: key statements (NPPF paragraph)	Neighbourhood Plan Policies – Conformity Assessment
of communities and residential environments, and ensure an integrated approach to considering the location of housing, economic uses and community facilities and services. **103.** Planning policies should be based on robust and up-to-date assessments of the need for open space, sport and recreation facilities (including quantitative or qualitative deficits or surpluses) and opportunities for new provision.	on the main site constraints and opportunities, and taking into account the wider general policies on matters such as design, flood risk, biodiversity and heritage. No obvious conformity issues have been identified, with the policies being refined through the Regulation 14 consultation feedback from BCP Council and the other statutory consultees.

Conformity Conclusions

The analysis of the plan proposals in relation to national planning policy and guidance, as shown in the preceding tables, does not highlight any fundamental conformity issues.

On this basis, there are no apparent reasons to conclude other than the Neighbourhood Plan would meet the basic condition of having regard to national policy and guidance from the Secretary of State.

8. EU and sustainability obligations

The 'making' of the Neighbourhood Plan must not breach or conflict, and must be compatible, with EU obligations, must not have a significant effect on a European site, and must contribute to the achievement of sustainable development. It must not breach human rights, within the meaning of the Human Rights Act 1998.

Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA)

The Neighbourhood Plan is accompanied by a full SEA, which has been subject to consultation with the three statutory bodies. This is provided as part of the submission documents.

The SEA report, which was subject to consultation at Regulation 14, considered the following themes as relevant to the plan area:

- BIODIVERSITY, FLORA AND FAUNA: the potential impacts on sites of national or international significance for wildlife, directly or indirectly
- CULTURAL HERITAGE: the potential impacts on nationally important designated heritage assets, directly or indirectly
- WATER AND CLIMATIC FACTORS: the potential to affect water resources and quality through increased consumption and waste-water discharges, and potential impact on / of climate change, including flood risk and coastal erosion.
- POPULATION AND HUMAN HEALTH: the potential to impact on housing availability, and access to services and facilities

It concluded that, overall, the Neighbourhood Plan will respond positively to the environmental objectives identified through the SEA. This is particularly the case in relation to biodiversity, cultural heritage, climatic factors relating to sustainable travel, and meeting housing needs.

It noted that, whilst the Plan does not contain explicit provision to reduce energy consumption from non-renewable resources, and support the transition to net zero emission sources, this is likely to be achieved through other mechanisms, including Policies ME3 and ME4 of the Local Plan, national planning policy and Building Regulations. There were a mix of positive and negative impacts anticipated with regard to the objective relating to climate change resilience and associated flooding and coastal erosion. This was due to the fact that historic buildings are unlikely to maximise opportunities for water recycling (but this impact will be limited in its extent given the relatively low number of buildings impacted), and the site allocation relating to the Civic Offices site which lies within a flood risk area (but the policy makes clear that this cannot come forward without passing the sequential and exception tests as

appropriate under national planning policy). Overall the plan is considered to score positively against this objective.

It also noted that the policy relating to the retention of car parking capacity within the town centre (Policy 12) scored poorly against two of the objectives, but was considered to be important in ensuring the ongoing viability of the town centre and associated access to key local facilities. It does not prevent the loss of car parks in the longer time when the modal shift has been achieved and demand for parking places is reduced.

The three main statutory consultees were consulted as part of the Regulation 14 consultation, and their responses are summarised as follows:

→ Environment Agency – response received, no specific comments on the SEA
→ Historic England – note from the SEA Environmental Report that HE guidance is cited and a detailed assessment of relevant heritage assets proposed, that the sites are essentially brownfield in nature, and some have had prior consents granted or are actually in the process of being developed. On this basis the site allocations appear acceptable in-principle and HE is happy to defer to the heritage team at BCP Council in the confirmation of their suitability relative to the protection and enhancement of relevant heritage assets.
→ Natural England - no objection to the Council's SEA report conclusions.

Habitat Regulations Assessment (HRA)

The Neighbourhood Plan is accompanied by a HRA, which was made available as part of the Regulation 14 Pre-Submission consultation.

Natural England's response to the consultation stated:

"The draft HRA has considered the policies in the consultation Neighbourhood Plan and will need to consider the effect of any changes made to the overall conclusions reached.

Given the levels of protection afforded habitats and international sites and the existing supporting evidence for identified impact pathways leading to appropriate mitigation strategies it is suggested that the conclusions are robust."

The report has been updated as a result of changes to the policies (including the deletion of Policy 7).

The achievement of sustainable development

Given the scope and conclusions of the SEA, and regard to national planning policy as set out in this report, it is considered appropriate to conclude that the Plan will also contribute to the achievement of sustainable development.

Nonetheless, the Neighbourhood Plan's policies were assessed against the sustainability objectives as set out in paragraph 8 of the NPPF:

→ **an economic objective** – to help build a strong, responsive and competitive economy, by ensuring that sufficient land of the right types is available in the right places and at the right time to support growth, innovation and improved productivity; and by identifying and coordinating the provision of infrastructure
→ **a social objective** – to support strong, vibrant and healthy communities, by ensuring that a sufficient number and range of homes can be provided to meet the needs of present and future generations; and by fostering a well-designed and safe built environment, with accessible services and open spaces that reflect current and future needs and support communities' health, social and cultural well-being; and
→ **an environmental objective** – to contribute to protecting and enhancing our natural, built and historic environment; including making effective use of land, helping to improve biodiversity, using natural resources prudently, minimising waste and pollution, and mitigating and adapting to climate change, including moving to a low carbon economy.

The table that follows summarises the key findings. One tick indicates a moderate positive contribution towards that objective, two ticks indicate a potentially higher positive contribution in that regard.

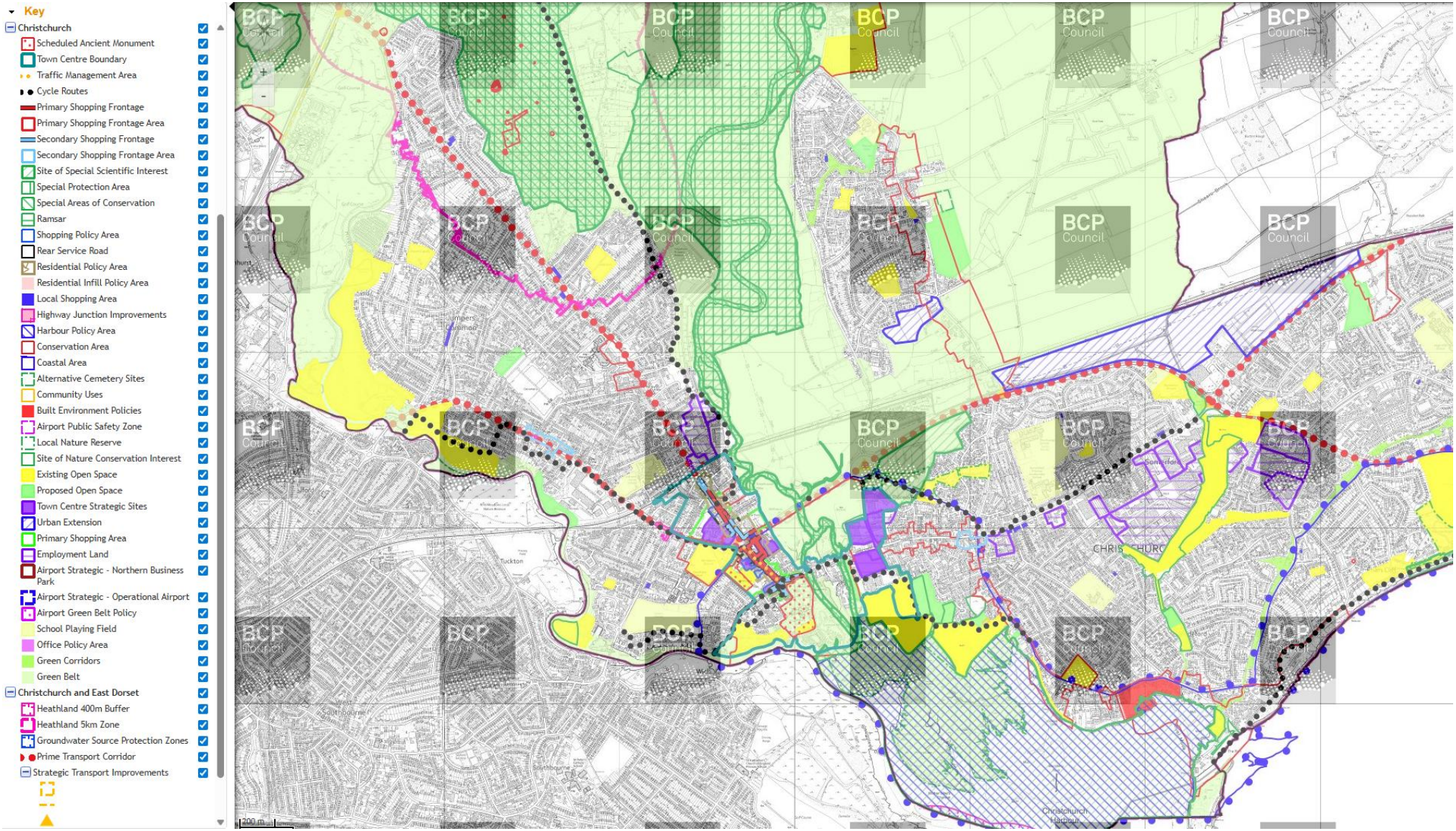
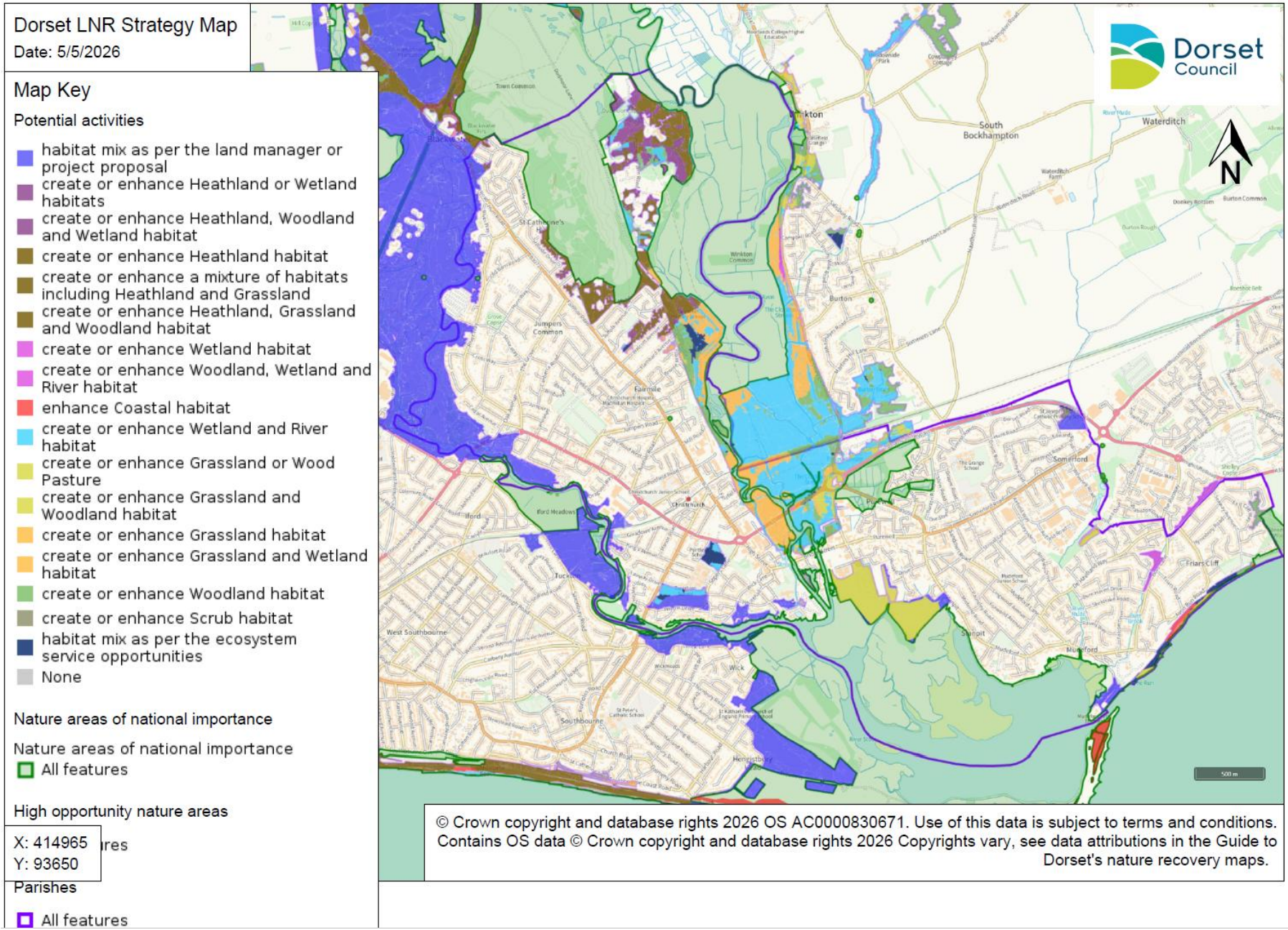
Sustainability assessment objective / Policies	Economic	Social	Environmental
1. Principles for Good Design		✓✓	✓✓
2. Shopfront Design		✓	✓
3. Locally Important Historic Buildings			✓
4. Locally Important Views			✓
5. Locally Important Green Spaces		✓	✓✓
6. Opportunities for Wildlife			✓✓
7. Opportunities for Walking and Cycling	✓	✓✓	✓
8. Design and Layout of Streets and Spaces	✓	✓✓	
9. Managing Parking Requirements		✓	
10. The Town Centre Strategy	✓	✓	✓
11. Town Centre Car Park Capacity	✓	✓	
12. Meeting Local Housing and Employment Needs	✓✓	✓✓	✓
13. Land at Stour Road	✓	✓	✓
14. Avon Trading Park frontage	✓	✓	✓
15. Numbers 43 to 47 Barrack Road	✓	✓	✓
16. Former Civic Offices Site and adjoining car parks	✓	✓	✓
17. Queensmead, Fairmile Road		✓	✓
18. Christchurch Hospital		✓	✓

This high level assessment confirms the view that, overall, the Neighbourhood Plan policies should contribute to the achievement of sustainable development, and also reflects the thorough / detailed approach taken on the town centre strategy and site allocations, many of which score positively across the three sustainability objectives.

Human Rights

No issues have been raised in relation to the possible contravention of Human Rights in the preceding consultations, and given the conclusions on the plan's general conformity with the strategic policies of the Local Plan and regard to National Planning Policy, it is reasonable to conclude that the making of the plan should not breach human rights.

Appendix 1: Extract from the Christchurch and East Dorset Local Plan- Part 1 Core Strategy Policies Map



Appendix 2: Dorset LNR Strategy Map Christchurch