



RINGWOOD LOCAL DISTINCTIVENESS SUPPLEMENTARY PLANNING DOCUMENT – ADOPTION

1 PURPOSE OF THIS REPORT

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to seek the adoption of the Ringwood Local Distinctiveness Supplementary Planning Document.
- 1.2 The importance of protecting and enhancing local character and distinctiveness, in the face of pressures for change, is an important issue for the Council and the wider public. Using planning to protect the environment and maintain local distinctiveness is an identified high level objective of the Council's Corporate Plan 2012-2016, locally is adopted policy in the Core Strategy, and nationally is supported by the National Planning Policy Framework.
- 1.3 The production of a series of Local Distinctiveness Supplementary Planning Documents (SPD) is included in the Local Development Scheme, and will form part of the Local Development Framework for New Forest District (outside the National Park). The purpose of these SPDs is to provide additional guidance on the implementation of policies within the adopted Core Strategy, and in particular Policies CS2 (Design quality) and Policy CS3 (Protecting and enhancing our special environment).
- 1.4 The objective of the Local Distinctiveness work is to produce SPDs that will carry substantial weight in reaching decisions on planning applications and which will be supported by Inspectors at appeal. The first two such SPDs (for New Milton and for Lymington) have already proved their value in this respect. The Ringwood Local Distinctiveness Supplementary Planning Document is the third to be considered for adoption by the Council. When adopted, this SPD will be a material consideration in considering development proposals within the built-up area of Ringwood.

2 BACKGROUND

- 2.1. In January 2009 the Planning and Transportation Review Panel considered a report setting out a proposed way forward for the production of a series of Local Distinctiveness SPDs. The first Local Distinctiveness SPD was for New Milton, adopted by the Council in 2010. The second, for Lymington, was adopted in 2011. Both have been used regularly since then to inform planning decisions.
- 2.2 Following the success of the New Milton and Lymington guidance, work began on a similar document for Ringwood. Local groups and organisations were invited to a workshop in March 2011. This enabled local people and groups to feed their views and information into the document from an early stage in its preparation. A pre-consultation draft of the Ringwood Local Distinctiveness SPD was considered by the Environment Overview and Scrutiny Panel on 15 November 2012. Representatives of Ringwood Town

Council and the Ringwood Society attended this meeting and expressed their support for the emerging guidance document.

- 2.3 The Draft Ringwood Local Distinctiveness SPD was published for a period of public consultation between 7 January and 18 February 2013.

3 RESULTS OF PUBLIC CONSULTATION

- 3.1 During the period of public consultation the Council's web page relating to the document received 659 'hits' and 26 respondents submitted written comments, several of which were very detailed and comprehensive.
- 3.2 The comments received, together with the recommended responses are set out in the schedule in Appendix A to this report. The great majority of the comments received were positive, helpful and constructive. The project team is grateful for the time and effort that the respondents have put in to considering the draft document and commenting on it. The Environment Overview and Scrutiny Panel is invited to discuss these responses at its meeting on 13 June 2013 and inform Cabinet of any comments it wishes to make to Cabinet regarding the recommended responses and changes to the draft document in response to the public consultation.
- 3.3 Appendix B of this report [*to follow*] is the proposed final text of the Ringwood Local Distinctiveness Supplementary Planning Document. This final text incorporates amendments made in response to comments received, together with other minor editing changes. Appendix B may be viewed via to the following web link [*link to be inserted*]. Any Members requiring a printed copy should request this via the contact name at the end of this report, and one will be provided. A small number of printed copies will be available at the meeting.
- 3.4 Appendix C provides a summary of the proposed changes to the maps in response to the public consultation and, in some instances, to improve clarity and consistency.

4 MAIN CHANGES PROPOSED

- 4.1 As indicated above, the great majority of the consultation comments received were supportive and constructive. There were a few instances where it appeared that parts of the document may have been misunderstood, and further editing has been undertaken in these areas in order to improve clarity.
- 4.2 Section 1, particularly the paragraphs setting out the structure and purpose of the document, has been substantially edited. A definition of local distinctiveness has now been included, and the message that protecting and enhancing local distinctiveness can be done without stifling innovation in design has been reinforced.
- 4.3 Character Area 1 (Town Centre) has been partly re-written and new sections added. Reference to The Close is now included, a significant area that had been accidentally omitted from the consultation draft. Additional illustrative material and new paragraphs have been added to strengthen and clarify the guidance for the town centre.

- 4.4 The tables setting out key defining elements that appear at the end of each of the nine character area chapters have been strengthened, and the relative lack of detail in some has been made good.
- 4.5 Character Area 6 (Crow and Hightown) received a particularly high volume of comment from residents, probably arising from concerns about the proposed development of land east of Crow Lane (the RING3 site), proposed in the Local Plan Part 2: Sites and Development Management document (currently under Public Examination). Additional text has been included in response to the comments received, and the table of key defining elements has been augmented.
- 4.6 Some of the character area boundaries have been refined. A more logical boundary line between areas 6 and 7 has been drawn, with the large open area east of Eastfield Lane now included in area 6 rather than area 7. Minor adjustments have been proposed to the boundaries between areas 1 and 2, between areas 7 and 2, and at the southern extremity of area 5.
- 4.7 Whilst the majority of consultation comments received were constructive, it has not been possible to accommodate every suggestion offered. One consultation response, made by Beardmore Urban acting on behalf of McCarthy & Stone, is strongly critical of the methodology employed and suggests that the whole document should be withdrawn. However, the methodology has been developed over a number of years, successfully marries professional and community inputs, and from the evidence provided by the two previously adopted SPDs is resulting in practical guidance that is helping the Council meet its corporate and planning policy objectives.
- 4.8 Details of the proposed revisions, additions and refinements to the document are identified in the 'Response' column of the Schedule in Appendix A).

5 CONCLUSIONS

- 5.1 With the adoption of the final version of the Ringwood Local Distinctiveness Supplementary Planning Document the document becomes part of the Local Development Framework for New Forest District (outside the National Park). The document will be a material consideration in the determination of planning applications within the built-up area of Ringwood, and will play a key role in the implementation of Policies CS2 and CS3 of the adopted Core Strategy.

6 ENVIRONMENTAL IMPLICATIONS /CRIME AND DISORDER IMPLICATIONS/ EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY IMPLICATIONS

- 6.1 The SPD will increase understanding and appreciation of local character and distinctiveness in Ringwood, and the design advice provided will help improve the quality of the built environment.
- 6.2 There are no implications for Crime and Disorder, or for Equality and Diversity.

7 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

7.1 None beyond existing budgets.

8 COMMENTS OF PLANNING AND TRANSPORTATION PORTFOLIO HOLDER

8.1 *I am pleased to see the Ringwood Local Distinctiveness SPD which is the third such document we have generated. We have now had a number of years to assess the impact of the New Milton and Lymington Local Distinctiveness documents and the evidence is that it does inform better design for our towns and in the worst cases, it does help prevent inappropriate development. I, therefore whole heartedly recommend the adoption of the Ringwood Document."*

9 COMMENTS OF THE ENVIRONMENT OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY PANEL

9.1 The Panel supported the Ringwood Local Distinctiveness Supplementary Planning Document as amended and thanked all those who had submitted comments in response to the consultation, which had helped to enhance the Document's robustness for the protection of the special character of Ringwood.

10. RECOMMENDATIONS

That the Ringwood Local Distinctiveness Supplementary Planning Document (as set out in Appendix B and Appendix C, subject to final proof-reading and editing corrections) be adopted as part of the Local Development Framework for New Forest District (outside the National Park).

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Background

Published

Appendix A

Ringwood Local Distinctiveness SPD: comments and proposed amendments

The draft Ringwood Local Distinctiveness was published for public consultation between 7th January and 18th February 2013. There were 659 hits on the web page and written comments were received from 26 respondents. These are set out (in document order) below, together with the initial assessment of how the Council should respond to the comments.

Section/Page	Rep. No.	Name of representee	Comment	Response/ proposed amendments
General				
	01	Ringwood Society	We consider that overall the document is comprehensive and well considered and congratulate and thank all those who have been involved at NFDC for their efforts.	Comment is supportive – no response needed
	02	Chris Treleaven	<p><u>General</u>: This consultation document has been prepared by the NFDC Environmental Design team with particularly detailed attention and thoroughness in relating the history of the built environment of Ringwood to the social and economic development of the Town. The importance of the unique environmental setting of the Town to both past and on-going development is a consistent theme of the document, and is welcomed as a major factor to be addressed when considering new development. The Environmental Design team are to be congratulated on the professional thoroughness of their very pertinent assessments of the distinctive character of Ringwood and future guidance on how to respect and enhance this.</p> <p><u>Definition of Distinctiveness</u>: The term “Local Distinctiveness” needs some definition. When used in a planning context, this term frequently implies that, describing a particular locality or building</p>	<p>Comment is supportive – no response needed</p> <p>Definition of Distinctiveness inserted under ‘Structure and purpose of this document’ at 1.15 <i>Local distinctiveness is the essence of what makes a place special to us. It is the sum of landscape, wildlife, archaeology, history,</i></p>

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			<p>group in terms of character, <u>automatically</u> elevates the merit of that character to a level which must be followed by future development. In other words, there is no such thing as <u>bad</u> Local Distinctiveness!</p> <p>Yet, whilst Ringwood (along with most settlements) has many locally distinctive townscapes, localities and buildings which have demonstrably valuable character profiles to be respected, there are other locally distinctive but poorly designed elements with no contributing merit and which could do with redevelopment or reconstruction if not demolition! This Document is a little coy in places about making judgements or comments to help distinguish between “good”, “adequate” or “bad” Distinctiveness, as we shall see later in these comments.</p>	<p><i>traditions, buildings and crafts - everything that makes somewhere truly unique. Where we live and work is unique and whilst elements of its character may be similar across the country, in combination such elements are uniquely valued as part of a local sense of place. This document seeks to explain that combination of characteristics which make Ringwood’s places special to us(those who live and work in this place).</i></p> <p>Others have also called for less coyness in making judgements as well as clearer purpose in making those judgements as shown through illustration. . Revisions therefore include caption changes for illustrations: fig 2.1; fig 7.5; fig 7.18; fig 8.1; fig 8.6 and fig 8.7 as well as a revised section for Character Area 1 which illustrates the importance of some of the key defining elements of the town centre streets and why some developments have had mixed success in responding to them. However, this is restricted to drawing lessons from positive examples. The document tries to avoid criticising examples which merely undermine the key defining aspects that distinguish an area.</p>
	03	HCC (Strategic Environment)	The Ringwood Local Distinctiveness is an excellent piece of work, not only in its level of detail of characterisation but also in the evaluation and guidance which I think will be very useful in policy and DC work.	Comment is supportive – no response needed
	04	Hampshire Buildings Preservation Society	<p>Hampshire Buildings Preservation Trust supports the draft SPD on Ringwood Local Distinctiveness for adoption.</p> <p>The guidance on locally significant buildings and structures is particularly welcome.</p>	<p>Comment is supportive – no response needed</p> <p>Comment is supportive – no response needed</p>

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	05	Natural England	<p>Due to staff resource levels we have not been able to go through the Ringwood Local Distinctiveness Supplementary Planning Document in any great detail. We do however commend the principle and are glad to see policy drawing on the New Forest Landscape Character Assessment.</p>	<p>Comment is supportive – no response needed</p>
	06	English Heritage	<p>English Heritage welcomes the principle of the production of this Supplementary Planning Document and its intention to provide guidance to support Local Plan Part 1 Policies CS2 and CS3. This additional guidance and support is important given that there are no detailed design policies in the Local Plan Part 2.</p> <p>However, whilst the document is intended to protect the local character and distinctiveness of Ringwood specifically, the guidance for the whole settlement in Section 3 does not appear to be specific, or locally distinct, to Ringwood. The table of “Elements of character and identity: Ringwood” rather appears to contain a number of general design principles that, whilst worthwhile, could apply to any settlements. In themselves, these are useful in highlighting important elements of design, but I am not convinced that they would ensure the character and distinctiveness of Ringwood is protected and enhanced.</p> <p>In addition, the detailed analysis of each of the nine character areas are very detailed descriptions of each area, but give little guidance or direction on the details: building forms, layouts, materials etc, that make each area locally distinct. For example, “Traditional and locally characteristic materials should be chosen for this area as for the conservation area” (e.g. on page 51) is a laudable principle, but I would have expected a guide to local distinctiveness to set out what those materials are. Similarly, “Plot width Generally very important in the residential streets” (page 62) highlights an important consideration, but provides no</p>	<p>Comment is supportive – no response needed</p> <p>Section 3 links the document to the process of understanding local context and how to respond to it which is introduced through By Design and through the Council’s Housing Design Density and Character SPD. The tables draw attention to elements of character and identity that in combination create places which are locally distinct. Broad definitions and comment on the left (supported by the diagram on the right are relevant to many areas but the guidance sections and some illustrations call for responses that would help to support and improve local distinctive character here.</p> <p>Largely the document does note the importance of certain characteristics but calls upon the designer or developer to investigate in closer detail the objectively observable information. However, some additional assistance has been added into the tables especially in Character Area 1 where for instance the materials are given as <i>“These are Red brick and plain clay tile or slate Occasionally limewashed cob and timber with thatched roofs.”</i></p>

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			<p>guidance on those plot widths.</p> <p>I appreciate that the Council may prefer simply to identify the design considerations that should be taken into account when new development is proposed and not to be too prescriptive in its detailed design requirements for new development, but if the locally distinct character of Ringwood is to be conserved and enhanced, I would expect greater guidance in this document on <u>how</u> to actually achieve the objective of Policies CS2 and CS3. As it is, I feel the document is very descriptive, but contains little guidance.</p> <p>Nevertheless, English Heritage welcomes this initiative and acknowledges the efforts of the Council in producing this document.</p>	<p>Comment is supportive – no change proposed in response to this.</p>
	07	Environment Agency	No comments to make at this time	
	08	New Forest National Park Authority (Policy)	<p>The document is very comprehensive and contains a great deal of information about Ringwood and will provide excellent guidance on how new development should be undertaken in the future to ensure that the local distinctiveness of Ringwood is positively maintained. I particularly found section 2 interesting in explaining Ringwood’s unique landscape setting.</p> <p>From a Policy point of view, I would add that the recognition of Ringwood’s unique position on the edge of the New Forest and the importance of preserving its setting is particularly welcomed (for example as set out in paragraph 2.4). Proximity to the National Park is a key statutory planning issue as set out in Section 62(2) of the Environment Act 1995 which places a general duty on all relevant authorities (including neighbouring authorities) to have regard to the purposes of the National Park when carrying out their activities. This includes activities that are outside the Park</p>	<p>Comment is supportive – minor changes in the section are included in response to other comments.</p> <p>The following text has been added to paragraph 1.4: <i>“The area to which this guidance refers is outlined in Fig 2 and does not necessarily follow parish or other administrative boundaries. The assessments undertaken refer to the built up area of Ringwood and its rural edges. For proposals outside of this, it is expected that this document will help inform design decisions and the reader is referred to the NFDC Landscape Character Assessment and the New Forest National Park’s relevant planning guidance”</i></p>

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			but which may have an impact within the National Park, including built development within Ringwood.	
	09	New Forest National Park Authority (Conservation)	<p>The document is very comprehensive and contains a lot of useful information about Ringwood and the importance of local distinctiveness, and will help to provide the local framework within which proposals for development can be considered. The sections of historic and landscape context and ‘What Makes Ringwood a special place’ and elements of character and identity are particularly helpful.</p> <p>A few general points:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The document is very long and wordy. The illustrations are good and so are the annotated maps and tables. Could the text be cut back to reduce the size of the document? • Some of the wording may need looking at again (examples given)...The report may benefit from some independent proof reading. • There appears to be rather a lot of personal opinion (examples given). Care needs to be taken with a document like this not to alienate house owners by criticising individual properties (examples given) • Some of the sentences are very long and need to be either simplified or punctuated better (examples given). • The report needs to be more consistent. Where it refers to a particular feature which contributes to the local distinctiveness it would be worth stressing its importance and the need to retain or improve e.g. para. 4.6.1 Also where there is scope to improve something is it worth mentioning 	<p>Comment is supportive – no response needed</p> <p>The target audience includes residents, elected members, developers, designers and decision makers. In order to offer thorough understanding of the place at the same time as avoiding the tendency to prescribe solutions, the format includes description to assist in distilling the key defining elements of character and is presented visually as well as in words. The document will be subject to further proof-reading before final publication and we thank the NPA for pointing out some proof-reading errors which have now been amended.</p> <p>The document generally seeks to avoid criticizing individual properties (although some respondents have called for the opposite approach). One specific example, the illustration at fig 8.13, has now been omitted.</p> <p>The wording at paragraphs 4.2.9, 4.5.6, 4.5.7, 4.7.1 and 4.7.6 has been reviewed, shortened and made clearer.</p> <p>At 4.2.20, it is proposed to add the words <i>“Replacement with native species, appropriate to the local landscape would improve biodiversity as well as helping to repair the rural edge”</i>.</p>

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			<p>this e.g. para. 4.2.20 – is there some scope here for native planting? Also figure 6.4. The text in fig. 7.8 and 8.14 however is particularly good as they pick out features of importance.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The tables are useful but the standard format appears to have been used for each character area and not all categories have been filled in which gives the impression that the table is incomplete. To cut down the bulk of the document it may be worth removing any rows without entries - there are 14 incomplete rows in the Southern Approach table for example. • Additional detailed and helpful suggestions made on formatting and editing corrections 	<p>Fig 6.4 is dealt with by the proposed additional paragraphs seeking improvement to the rural edge</p> <p>The tables have been reviewed and additional information included in some (particularly for Character Area 1). Generally, where information would simply duplicate that given in the main overall table in section three, the row is left blank in the individual areas. This does not mean such issues are any less important. To ensure that the most important issues are explained the list of 'Key defining elements' which precede these tables has been reviewed (and updated for Character Areas 1, 2 and 6) to ensure that they are more consistent with the descriptive text.</p> <p>The editing corrections are appreciated. The final document will be proof-read again before final publication.</p>
	10	Ringwood Town Council	<p>Members were concerned that, given the current economic situation, the District Council had continued with expenditure on this non-statutory document, when resources could be better utilised elsewhere.</p> <p>The document is comprehensive and includes a lot of very detailed information, particularly on the history of the town. However, it appears to be a single person's viewpoint and much of the content is subjective.</p>	<p>The NFDC Corporate Plan 2012-2016 includes a commitment to "using planning to protect the environment and maintain local distinctiveness". Local Distinctiveness guidance previously produced for other settlements has improved the quality of planning submissions, promoted more informed dialogue, and improved planning outcomes. Adoption of guidance for Ringwood is expected to be equally beneficial for the town.</p> <p>Any publication of this nature will of course reflect the views of its main authors to some extent, but it is based on objective assessment and is informed by local community input. The following insertion is proposed for section 1 at paragraph 1.8, to make this clearer: <i>"This guidance provides a detailed assessment of what gives the settlement of Ringwood its own unique character and identity, and offers guidance on an area by area basis to ensure that new development will respect local context and</i></p>

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			<p>Reference should be made to the fact that the town has a near complete collection of religious buildings, and specifically to the Catholic Church in The Close, which is a particularly distinctive building.</p>	<p><i>strengthen, rather than erode, valued local identity. Whilst there is an element of judgement inherent in the production of such a document, the content is based on first hand observation, objective analysis and assessment, informed professional judgement, and input from the local community at many stages, from the project inception stage, through the course of the main technical work and via further consultation prior to adoption."</i></p> <p>A significant number of changes are being made in response to the consultation feedback, to ensure that the final adopted guidance will be informed by a range of different community and professional viewpoints.</p> <p>The Catholic Church is added into town centre character area. Two other churches are noted already in the document but buildings of distinction representing other religions have not been found. Is diversity of religious buildings characteristic of Ringwood? If further evidence is made available on this, the Council could consider making reference to it.</p>
	11	Ellingham Harbridge & Ibsley Parish Council	<p>The intention of the document is given in near enough the first sentence - para 1.1 of Section 1. To paraphrase: ' to help a) identify the local character and distinctiveness of areas of Ringwood, and b) provide guidance on new development to protect local character and distinctiveness'. In Ellingham Harbridge & Ibsley Parish Council's opinion:-</p> <p>a) has been done very competently and thoroughly. It's interesting how, generally, Ringwood can still be divided into such distinct geographical areas, reflecting changing fashions and period of development. For instance, the oldest area (town centre) has not unduly suffered from having its guts ripped out, as befell so many town centres from the 1950s onwards, and despite the appallingly crass way the dual-ling of the A31 was driven through the town.</p>	<p>Comment is supportive – no response needed</p>

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			<p>b) - we will have to wait and see in the years to come! On balance, reflecting and respecting existing architectural design in any new development in an area is probably better than deliberate counter-style (such as proposing a glass cube next to a row of thatched cottages), but slavish pastiche to match an existing streetscape needs to be guarded against as well. For the most part the guidance is sensible and not overly prescriptive.</p> <p>In relation to the north Ringwood area - 20c onwards and particularly inter-war years - is that the fashion of that period was often for single-storey houses fronting the street on large plots, with little or no open spaces, or development around a hub or community area. Times, tastes and economic climates change - so currently it's more about cul-de-sac and apartments development.</p> <p>We think it should be noted that though Headlands and Ebbespacher were built for Ringwood employment, and it's helpful to have these sites covered in the Distinctiveness guide, it is within the parish of Ellingham Harbridge & Ibsley, not Ringwood.</p>	<p>A note has been added to paragraph 4.4.11 accordingly.</p>
	12	David Beardmore acting for McCarthy & Stone	<p>The stated aims of the document are to be welcomed and are broadly consistent with central government advice on the subject. It is however important to bear in mind two of its declared aims when examining the main body of the document. Firstly it is noted that: <i>"applied properly, the guidance in this document will not inhibit innovative design...."</i> Secondly that it is <i>"intended to provide a starting point in the design process by setting out a clear statement of the existing distinctive qualities of the place in question."</i></p>	

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			<p>This suggests that the study may have started from a basic misconception, namely the failure to recognise that character analysis is essentially a tool for recording as objectively as possible the characteristics that recur in a particular area that collectively give it its distinctive character. It is not intended (see <i>“Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment” (Second Edition)</i> published by the Landscape Institute and the Institute of Environmental Management and Assessment) to assess quality. The perception of quality is inherently a more subjective exercise and requires carefully balanced professional judgment based on clear evidence. This document does not distinguish properly between evidence and policy.</p> <p>There is therefore a danger that the methodology used by this study has attempted to conflate character analysis qualitative judgment and policy thus undermining its stated purpose. The subsequent sections of the document confirm that this has in fact happened, thus compromising much of the potentially valuable information it contains.</p> <p>Despite the laudable aims behind the publication of this document it fails to meet its own declared objectives for the following reasons:</p> <p>It fails to recognise that character area identification is an analytical tool and not intrinsically one of policy formulation which should follow the survey, not form part of it</p> <p>Its methodology is flawed, particularly in attempting to apply standard typologies and policies across the whole study area</p>	<p>The document is expected and intended to go further than a landscape and visual impact assessment. Greater clarity as to the document’s purpose is set out in the revisions to section 1 under the title <i>‘Structure and purpose of this document’</i> including a definition for Local Distinctiveness.</p> <p>The evidence on which the guidance is based is from various sources, including first hand observation through walking the lanes, streets and spaces and recording on maps and photographs; listening and engaging with local people and further consultation which has increased the strength of guidance because it reflects the views of the community as well as the professional view.</p> <p>The methodology has been developed over several years in collaboration with community, elected members and professional planners and designers.</p>

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			<p>leading inevitably to a “one size fits all” approach</p> <p>Its identification of character areas is guided by assertions of doubtful validity, not always supported by the evidence, leading to glaring errors in the delineation of boundaries</p> <p>The document should be withdrawn and re-written around a sound methodology with evidence being used to inform and assist the production of policies appropriate to their scale, ie town wide or area based. Evidence should not be qualified by contentious interpretations that seek to support preconceived policies. Without revisiting these fundamental principles and injecting some intellectual rigour and balanced analysis it is difficult to see how the report will be of any real value as a Supplementary Planning Document, being more likely to be one that is subject to challenge and considerable criticism.</p>	<p>In response to consultation feedback, some of the boundaries between character areas have been amended and refined. This is a good indication that the consultation is fulfilling its purpose of improving the quality of the final guidance. In response to this particular comment, the definition of the boundary between areas 2 and 7 around Carvers Sports Ground is proposed to be amended so that it lies entirely within Character Area 2 since as Mr Beardmore points out, it does not have the characteristic of views of the forest to the east highlighted for area 7. Mount Pleasant forms the clear transition point.</p> <p>It is not accepted that the document should be withdrawn and rewritten. The majority of the consultation responses have been positive and the document has received considerable support. The methodology is tried and tested through two previous similar documents already adopted by the Council. The methodology may not follow one already known to Mr Beardmore, but that is because it has been specifically developed by the Council and the guidance is more than a simple character analysis – it is guidance seeking to support, protect and improve a sense of local distinctiveness and necessarily requires a degree of input from the community to make an informative statement about what is locally valued in the areas where people live or work.</p> <p>See also comments below in response to Mr Beardmore’s conclusions.</p>
	16	Myriam Fernando	<p>A key improvement that applies to all areas of Ringwood would be to remove overhead power and telephone lines. In recent years there has been a substantial increase in the height and thickness of overhead cables, increasing their negative impact on the area. Whereas post war planning has ensured that later development</p>	<p>Agree - but it is beyond the scope of this document.</p>

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			<p>installed this infrastructure underground, on older roads in Ringwood overhead cabling detracts considerably from the appearance of the town. The townscape would be improved if key linkages were cleared of this intrusion, in particular Southampton Road, Hightown Road, Crow and Hightown Lane.</p>	
	18	Valerie Harbour	<p>This is a comprehensive report aimed at protecting Ringwood and its local character and significant buildings. I would not argue about its intention, which is admirable. Too much poor building and design has gone on, across the country, for too many decades. It is time we became more sensitive about our environment. And what we do now must be properly done.</p> <p>My concern is with the application of these aims. I understand that the report is intended to be a guideline. I hope it will be used as such and not become set and rigid. Planners have considerable powers of refusal and over-reference to this report could result in Ringwood ending up as a pastiche. It is important to be aware when design is poor. It is also important to be able to recognise good and innovative design which may be outside the guidelines. A blending of past and present, sympathetically done, can enhance the town. We need to protect the past – but we do, also, have to move forward.</p> <p>In view of the above, I think the Council has failed badly to fulfil its own guidelines with the Gateway project. The design of this building is mediocre and uninspired. It certainly does not meet the Council’s own stated aim of respecting local distinctiveness. And its location – in the middle of the busiest part of the car park – is idiosyncratic, to say the least. The Council has missed a great opportunity here to create something noteworthy at the very heart of the town – both with the building and the space encroached upon. It could have been so very much better. It could have been a talking point which put Ringwood on the map.</p>	<p>Comment is supportive – no response needed</p> <p>It is proposed to include the following words at paragraph 1.1 to strengthen this point: <i>“All development sites represent an opportunity to improve on the character and identity of a place through either innovative or traditional design solutions provided that they reinforce local character and distinctiveness”</i>.</p> <p>Views noted, but this document seeks to define what constitutes the local distinctiveness in the area and to seek to underpin and improve upon that. Highlighting individual developments may not always be helpful in doing that. No change proposed.</p>

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			<p>Nor does it inspire confidence that Ringwood is in safe hands when one reads in the document the description, for example, of the shops in Southampton Road (some of the worst building in the town) as a ‘classically proportioned, neo-Georgian façade...a striking feature’. The Council must lose credibility when it puts its name to nonsense of this kind.</p> <p>My immediate concern, however, is with the quality of writing in the report which is, generally, embarrassingly poor. It is often so dense and confused as to obscure, almost completely, the point being made (see pp. 89/90). Much of the rest of the report demonstrates that one of the writers, at least, has little understanding of the rules of grammar or what constitutes a simple sentence. I cannot think the Council will want its image compromised in this way and I urge it to take a very careful look at both the grammar and style employed in much of this work before making it public.</p>	<p>References to the striking facadism of the neo Georgian shop fronts on Southampton Road have been considerably revised to clarify the point.</p> <p>Noted. Whilst it appears that the respondent may perhaps have been commenting on an earlier (pre-publication) draft, many of the sections have been reviewed to correct grammatical and typing errors, and some of the longer sentences have been simplified in the interests of clarity. Further proof-reading will be undertaken before final publication.</p>
	19	Chris Lee	<p>In response to your consultation document I feel that the plan should include the aspiration that the whole of Ringwood be included in the National Park area.</p>	<p>Outside the scope of this publication to address, but the comment will be passed to the New Forest National Park Authority.</p>
	21	Tony Ring	<p>In general the draft plan offers a welcome sympathetic and clear overview of the current Ringwood environment. It appears to invite any development plans to be created in forms appropriate to the established nature of the area. However it is my strong belief that the long term potential for retention of character, enhanced progress of business opportunities and added value to residents ‘quality of life’ issues was lost when the town was excluded from the New Forest National Park perimeter. I believe there to be a consensus of public opinion in favour of ‘The New Forest Market Town’ being included within the New Forest National Park and therefore wonder a} if there is any way to</p>	<p>Outside the scope of this publication to address, but the comment will be passed to the New Forest National Park Authority.</p>

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			<p>measure opinion and b) if as I believe there is a public desire for inclusion there is any way to negotiate boundary change with authority responsible.</p> <p>I believe many of the issues raised in or by the draft plan will be satisfactorily addressed by the parameters incorporated in National Park status.</p>	
Sections 1, 2 and 3				
	01	Ringwood Society	<p>2.17 We dispute the statement ‘historical predominance of livestock over arable...’ Historically Ringwood had a mixed agricultural character. In the first half of the 19th century up until the Repeal of the Corn Laws, corn was an important part of the weekly market, in fact its main purpose. With such a strong history of brewing and a preponderance of malthouses, barley was an important crop. The existence of a flour mill on the Avon at Ringwood for nearly a thousand years shows that wheat was also grown. The two large open fields known as Spittlefield and Northfield were divided into strips until the Enclosure Act of 1809 and can even be detected in early 20th century aerial photos.</p>	<p>Agreed. Paragraph 2.17 is proposed to be re-worded to read: <i>“These long narrow plots may simply have overlain field boundary divisions, a not untypical pattern in the immediate locality, prior to the Enclosure Act”</i>.</p>
	02	Chris Treleaven	<p>3) <u>Business Parks</u>: A welcome innovation of the Environmental Design Team is to include and expand on the importance of the quality of design of Business Parks. The relationship of these built environments to the wider area and the relevance of layout and building design to those who work there has (at last) been recognised in this Document. For example, the comparisons made between Headlands and Parkside business parks implicitly provide valuable clues as to how to succeed with proposed new business park development.</p>	<p>Agreed. Propose redefining the character area boundary to place Lynes Farm within Character Area 6.</p>

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			<p><u>Area Assessment format:</u> The partition of the Town into distinguishable Character Areas will be particularly helpful to future development designs (at whatever scale) as they promote the understanding of context without prescriptive formulation which might inhibit innovation. The one Area whose boundary is perhaps suspect is that between 6 and 7, wherein Lynes Farm has become somewhat artificially bisected. Bearing mind past and no doubt future discussions regarding this land, it might be preferable to include all of Lynes Farm in Area 6 just in case development does occur there, where relevance to the existing Hightown Lake area would be more important than to the older built area of Area 7.</p> <p><u>Infilling as opposed to greenfield site development:</u> Much of the Document implicitly relates to future “brownfield” development, in so far the parameters/characteristics of each locality are described in a way which assists future replacement development to respect the defined local character. Whilst this analysis is indeed crucial to the success of such future proposals, Ringwood also has potential allocations for greenfield employment and residential development (as well as large scale redevelopment such as the old Wellworthy site).</p>	<p>This is difficult since the document assesses existing character but section 1 has been re-worded to bring greater clarity on the structure and purpose of the document, and in relation to the rural edge paragraph 2.12 has been amended to read: <i>“The rural edge is particularly sensitive where the settlement lies on the flat river terraces. To the north of the town, gravel extraction has created tree lined lakes which contain the urban edge. To the east, the rising forest farmland makes a natural boundary north of the A31 but south of this the open farmland behind Eastfield Lane has a raw and unsympathetic edge of rear garden boundaries. The southern edge also has some abrupt boundaries where housing and industry lies stark along the field boundaries around the Crow Lane and Crow Arch Lane area. Finally the western edge offers views from the river floodplain which are vulnerable where intruded upon by occasional views of buildings. Any new development should create and repair these rural edges. This must be through careful consideration of the landscape rather than simply screening with vegetation”.</i></p> <p>Agreed. Proposed new paragraph at 1.5 to read: <i>“The area to which this guidance refers is outlined in Fig 2 and does not necessarily follow parish or other administrative boundaries. The document refers to the built up area of Ringwood and its rural edges. For proposals outside of this, it is expected that this document will help inform design decisions and the reader is referred to the NFDC Landscape Character Assessment and the New Forest National Park’s relevant planning guidance”.</i></p>

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			<p>There is perhaps insufficient paid in the Document as to how to relate existing Local distinctiveness to the greenfield sites and even whether such sites offer the opportunity for new interpretations of local character. At least, the Document does emphasise the importance of respecting and relating development to the natural environmental characteristics of the Avon flood plain, the River terraces and the Western escarpment of the Avon Valley. (see comments on Area 6 below.)</p> <p>6) <u>National Park</u>: The existence of the National Park and its western boundary is only mentioned in passing (para. 2.4) in the Document, even though the settlements therein of Hangersley, Hightown Hill and Crow are part of the Ringwood Town community. Reference at least should be made to this boundary and the NPA defined Conservation Area in the Hangersley locality. Of course, in planning terms, whilst the two Planning Authorities are autonomous, there is an overtly shared purpose of respecting the overlooking landscapes of each – the need for the District to ensure the Valley views to the east as seen from the Town are respected is the conjugate of the Park boundary areas looking west over the Town maintaining the rural setting of the Town. (Figs B and C demonstrate these mutually important perspectives).</p> <p>p.s. perhaps the Document introduction should specifically state it is concerned only with the Built-up areas of Ringwood, as the countryside areas are also not dealt with in any detail.</p>	

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			<p><u>Existing NFDC Design publication:</u> The inclusion of sections of the widely acclaimed 2006 NFDC SPD “Housing Design Density and Character”, with accompanying photographs of relevant Ringwood examples, is welcomed as an important contribution to the methodology which future development proposals should follow. (see pp 25-38).</p> <p>8) <u>Height of buildings affecting both the wider rural landscape and the built townscape.</u></p> <p>The document refers to the Town having developed over the centuries without strong visual intrusion from tall buildings interrupting the Valley setting of the Town. The exceptions mentioned are two Churches (Fig B). However, new buildings with prominent vertical elements are appearing (often permitted as exceptions to planning policy). These include the Dean and Dyball building in Hightown Industrial Estate (Fig. H) and the Close Medical Centre. There may be a further example of possibly intrusive building height if the proposed Arts Centre “fly tower” at Greyfriars goes ahead.</p> <p>The point here is that taller buildings may indeed merit inclusion in the future but only if the design of these has a recognisable quality in relationship to the existing landscape and townscape. Perhaps the two Churches and indeed Greyfriars itself are now long</p>	<p>This is not strictly true in that no section of the housing design SPD is included in this guidance. The table explains those elements of character and identity (which were originally set out differently in the 2006 NFDC SPD “Housing Design Density and Character”), and goes on to explain how they are important in terms of local distinctiveness especially in terms of Ringwood.</p> <p>Comments noted.</p>

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			accepted examples of vertical harmony!	
	10	Ringwood Town Council	<p>2.16 This paragraph should be removed as it could conflict with the Town Council’s submission to the Highways Agency for improvements to the A31. In addition, the Highways Agency has acknowledged that Ringwood is not well signed off the A31 and there is a need for improved signage.</p> <p>2.26 The statement “It would be a mistake to dilute the characteristics of the place by wrongly assuming that because a ‘mixture’ has worked in the past, then anything will do” was welcomed and supported.</p> <p>2.27 This paragraph appears to contradict paragraph 2.7 on page 11, which states that the “..A31 trunk road harshly splits the town in two..”. Members were of the view that the introduction of the A31 had a significant impact on the town and still today causes a noise and pollution nuisance for residents.</p> <p>p21 It should be noted that Headlands Business Park is not within the parish boundary of Ringwood.</p>	<p>This paragraph appears to have been misinterpreted. To improve clarity, the words “<i>for instance</i>” are proposed to be added, so the paragraph would read: “<i>For instance, oversized buildings would be an obvious detriment but the cumulative effect of inappropriately sited advertisements, aerials, satellite dishes, illuminations, or poor boundary treatments could equally erode the distinctiveness of Ringwood.</i>”</p> <p>Comment is supportive – no change proposed</p> <p>The two paragraphs do not contradict one another but it is agreed that the A31 has significant impact. Slight amendment to the wording of paragraph 2.27 is proposed: “<i>Some new roads or relatively recent realignments have broken down parts of the town’s fabric. However, this spread-out patchwork has at least allowed roads such as the main A31 Ringwood Bypass (which removed the mill and vicarage from the mediaeval core) and Mansfield Road to be built with relatively little of the wholesale demolition of neighbourhoods too often seen in the histories of other towns.</i>”</p> <p>Noted and added to that paragraph.</p>

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			<p>Reference should be made to Carvers Industrial Estate and its distinctive relationship with the surrounding residential area and open space.</p> <p>p28 The guidance on building format is subjective. The second paragraph should to amended to read:</p> <p><i>“Where building forms (especially roof shapes and pitches) are consistent in a group or along a street, new building, extensions or additions should generally respect this and avoid significant changes to this format, unless the introduction of a new format would contribute positively to the street scene.”</i>. This would account for the fact that new and innovative design can add interest and be exciting.</p> <p>p36 It should be noted that the second cottage pictured on this page was demolished without consultation. Therefore, it is suggested that the photograph be replaced with a current example.</p> <p>p38 The importance of parking spaces should not be overlooked.</p>	<p>The meaning of this comment is unclear. The relationship (accessibility, visual impacts, containment, amenity contribution) between Carvers Industrial Estate and the surrounding areas both residential and public open space is extremely poor and although mentioned in references to Carvers is not particularly highlighted in the document. No change proposed.</p> <p>The document is about understanding and respecting local distinctiveness. Guidance on building format is measurable and objective. The issue of inviting innovation is one which requires careful handling taking care to understand what is locally distinct. We agree that the issue is important and it has therefore been referred to in a revised paragraph 1.21 in the opening chapter of the guidance: <i>“Design that respects its context is not simply about conforming to what has gone before. However, those aspects of character which are not valued or examples which undermine the distinct character of an area should not be allowed to unduly influence new designs. All development sites represent an opportunity to improve on the character and identity of a place through either innovative or traditional design solutions provided that they reinforce local character and distinctiveness”</i>.</p> <p>It is perhaps therefore a good example of what is referred to especially since the recent planning negotiation and subsequent decision reflects the guidance to some extent. It is however a poor photograph, so if a better quality image or an alternative example can be found it will be included.</p>

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			If sufficient parking is not provided, this will lead to an increase in on-street parking, which in itself can detract from the character of an area.	Agreed – no change proposed.
	25	Patrick Webster	<p>Paragraph 2.1 of the document refers to a wide swathe of rich meadows below the level of the town. However, local farmers are very unhappy with the state of the water meadows because the Environment Agency has stopped the annual cutting of weeds in the river causing the meadows to become saturated and too damp to cut in the traditional way.</p> <p>I welcome the statement on the Business Parks, especially Headlands but I would point out that not enough housing was allowed in conjunction with these new areas of employment. As a consequence we have a lot more traffic on the A31 and A338 and longer queues.</p> <p>Concerning Paragraph 2.9, NFDC should urge Ringwood Town Council to instruct its representatives on the Blashford Lakes Forum and Blashford Lakes Access Forum to request view points from the definitive and permissive paths in the Blashford Lakes System. I agree that it is like walking through a tunnel in many places on the paths and one does not know which lake is behind the jungle of trees.</p> <p>You show in Figure A a view of Ringwood and the lakes taken from the air, however, there is no indication in Ringwood of how to get to the lakes and indeed the local map on the information board in the main car park does not even give an indication that they exist. Also the improved path/cycle way by the A338 north from Ringwood stops 35 metres short of the permissive path by Ellingham Lake.</p> <p>I must point out that under the Blashford Lakes Strategic</p>	<p>This is beyond the scope of this document but the comment has been forwarded to the Environment Agency.</p> <p>Noted. As a more general planning point referring to past decisions, this is beyond the scope of this document.</p> <p>The Town Council’s attention will be drawn to this comment.</p> <p>This is beyond the scope of this document but the comments will be forwarded to the relevant council officer(s).</p> <p>This is beyond the scope of this document but the comments will</p>

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			Management Plan, 2006, paragraph 3.44, the aim was to encourage people to the lakes from the car parks in Ringwood on foot or by bicycle. Nothing has been done so far to carry out the wishes of NFDC and so we have 20,000 or more visitors a year coming by car along Ellingham Drove to the Study Centre area.	be forwarded to the relevant council officer(s).
Character Area 1 - Town Centre				
	01	Ringwood Society	<p>Character Area 1 - Town Centre - It is important that Ringwood Town centre retains its character and we consider that not enough is said about this aspect. Whilst appreciating that the NFDC Conservation Area Appraisal (2003) is extant we are concerned that it will not be read in conjunction with or have the same weight as the Distinctiveness document.</p> <p>Re para 4.1.6 Just because some development is of long standing it does not mean that it is entitled to be called locally distinctive. For example we do not agree that the buildings (Fig 1.5) in Southampton Road are “ successful examples faithful to the architectural principals.....adopting authentic proportions and materials “ or present a “very striking terrace of shops facing down Mansfield Road with proportions and fenestration creating an impressive facade”. We do not see how this ugly development – perhaps the worst in central Ringwood – could be described as “classically proportioned, neo Georgian façade...a striking feature”. The rear facade to the car park is poor and in fact we consider the terrace to be utilitarian 1930s buildings which could have been built anywhere and are indeed common around many outer</p>	<p>The reader is referred to paragraph 4.1.2 and the opening chapters. However, we agree that strength needs to be added to the guidance and have included</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Historic built environment</i> <p>into the key defining elements for both Character Areas 1 and 2.</p> <p>It is agreed that there is insufficient explanation here. A large section of this part of the document has been re-written with diagrams to explain the significance of certain illustrations and especially the significance of massing, scale and rhythms along the streets of the town centre.</p>

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			<p>London boroughs. They should not be emulated as good examples of local distinctiveness or as models for future development, in fact quite the opposite.</p> <p>Re para 4.1.11 – The Furlong – This development was build around an old mill building and originally it did reflect the form of the mill. Some of the shops have been altered in more recent years to include full height plate glass and wooden cladding and we submit that whilst some examples eg Waitrose have been successful the piece meal changes to some of the smaller shops do not respect distinctive building forms. If not halted the distinctiveness of the area will be lost in a move towards a more utilitarian area which could be anywhere in the UK. We believe that any development in this area needs careful attention.</p> <p>Re para 4.1.6 – we do not understand what is meant by “Further out along Southampton Road..... Southern side of Christchurch Roadundermine.... failing to take on the proportions.....in this part of the town” and would appreciate clarification.</p> <p>4.1.27/28 – Not every piece of open land should be seen as an opportunity for development and this green space forms a welcoming entry to the town. We do not want Ringwood to be just another suburb and many have said that they like to see the trees and not just more buildings as they enter the town. We strongly</p>	<p>Agreed. To paragraph 4.1.11 (now numbered 4.1.16) the following words have been added: <i>“It will be important to continue to respect the traditional and historic forms and use of locally typical materials in any additions or alterations”</i>. New text on shopfronts has been added at 4.1.19: <i>“It is important to retain the variety of size and type of shop whilst respecting heritage through careful shop front design, which should appear as intrinsic to the whole building form, complementing details and materials. Shop frontages should not impinge upon pedestrian connections or legibility of streets and spaces but rather seek to enhance the vitality and activity of the public realm through good design. More information is available in the Councils’ adopted (SPG) Shopfront Design Guide”</i>.</p> <p>See above response above. This section has been revised.</p> <p>In the interests of clarity, it is proposed to revise these paragraphs (now 4.1.35 and 4.1.36) to read: <i>“The outer edges of The Furlong itself are lined with trees and a small park – a simple grass space with large trees, somewhat removed from popular circulation. Re-establishing and enhancing</i></p>

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			<p>object to the use of the word 'mere' to describe this space and wonder if the Council has a hidden agenda by dismissing it as 'underused' There is already 'a green route' across the Car park and we wonder what is suggested. How would a route 'once again draw people through to the Market Place'?</p> <p>What is needed to draw people to the Market Place is clear signage from the Furlong Shopping Centre and the Gateway Square indicating that the Market Place is down Meeting House Lane or Star Lane.</p>	<p><i>the diagonal path, tree and hedge lines along the old drovers' route would better link the amenities of this relaxing area with the new gateway square.</i></p> <p><i>Such an amenity might not only serve to improve the town's attractiveness to visitors but if a holistic review of traffic through The Furlong were to be undertaken, this could improve pedestrian priority. The new square has been designed with the potential to facilitate direct access towards Market Place, down Meeting House Lane. Should the opportunity arise, the old drovers' route might once again draw people through to the market place, ensuring the viable future of the historic core for years to come."</i></p>
	02	Chris Treleaven	<p>1) Area of The Close and western end of Southampton Road:- Para 4.1.6 includes the phrasing - "examples that undermine the distinctive character ..failing to take on the proportions or mass of the styles they try to emulate by attempting to add a contemporary flavour without reference to the elements of building form that define the character of streets ...".</p> <p>Accepting this valid comment should have led in 2003 to the planning application refusal of the unrelieved and over dominant block of flats in the former Crown car park (approved by Officers at the time), or the Medical Centre in the Close (opposed by Officers but approved by Members). These examples of "undermining the distinctive character" have left the area of The Close with a totally incoherent set of buildings unrelated to each other or indeed any other "clues" which link to the architectural themes of this area.</p>	<p>See proposed revisions and additions to paragraphs 4.1.4 – 4.1.6 referred to above.</p> <p>Agreed, but it is not within the scope of this document to criticise previous planning decisions. An additional section has been included to correct the accidental omission of the area around and including The Close.</p>

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			<p>This point should be addressed in the final SPD as there are likely to be future planning applications to renew or replace other existing buildings in The Close.</p> <p>2) “Impressive facade” (para 4.1.6). One is not sure many Town residents would agree that the “striking terrace of shops” in Southampton Road (Fig. 1.5) are a celebrated element of local character. This author recalls that identical facades graced almost every London suburban 1930's extension (see shopping centres in N.W.9 Kingsbury and Colindale for example) and support the negative epithet of “could be anywhere” !.</p> <p>3) Bickerley Terrace (4.1.16) - There is an interesting comment regarding the “open plan dwellings” , wherein the observation is made that they “contribute no positive characteristic to the townscape...” but are screened by tree planting and at least bring some activity into this area. One hopes this is not a formulation for planning policy wherein inappropriate buildings can be allowed provided they are hidden and there's some other tangible benefit!</p> <p>4) The Furlong - Paras 4.1.27 & 28 – Possibly the most interesting commentary in the whole document – the opportunity described to re-establish the old link into the historic market place from the Gravel Lane/Mansfield Rd area by virtue of establishing a “green route” through the Furlong car park via the new Gateway building</p>	<p>See above – revisions and additions are proposed to paragraphs 4.1.4 – 4.1.6.</p> <p>Indeed not - the last half sentence referring to ‘activity’ has been omitted to avoid confusion.</p> <p>NB - this is retained but has been re-worded to improve clarity in the light of the Town Council’s response.</p>

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			<p>and Meeting House Lane. This is a tantalizing prospect and some practical ideas to achieve this aim would be welcome from both Officers and the local interested public.</p> <p>5) Narrow lanes and paths:- Para 4.1.9 recognises the of the many lanes and paths leading to the Town centre as constituting a major element of the local distinctiveness of Ringwood. However there is scant mention of maintaining and enhancing these links in the Key Defining elements and Area Guidance supplement pp 49 - 51, particularly in the Landscape and Scale sub-headings.</p>	<p>Revised key defining Elements to include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Mixture of uses interspersed with dwellings, gardens and trees – all linked by the narrow lanes and alleys connecting back to the central streets.
	03	HCC (Strategic Environment)	<p>I am happy with the level of compatibility between our County level assessment and the NFDC assessment for the town centre and immediately surrounding suburbs. I am happy to alter boundaries and descriptions in ours if necessary to reflect your more recent and more in depth work. These are minor alterations e.g. to extend the character area 5a south of the A31.</p>	<p>NB Some minor amendments are also proposed to our own character area boundaries.</p>
	10	Ringwood Town Council	<p>4.1.24 The Rotary Picnic Area is referred to in this paragraph as a “tranquil green space” and a partner to the Gateway Square. Members did not agree with either of these statements. Gateway Square in fact links with Dr Little Gardens, which is on the original drovers’ route.</p> <p>The word “Furlong” prior to “Gateway Square” should be deleted.</p> <p>4.1.27 The Council does not agree with the statement “There is potential here to combine this undervalued park as a partner with</p>	<p>As indicated above, these comments may in part be due to some misinterpretation and therefore the paragraph concerned (now numbered 4.1.32) has been re-worded to improve clarity as follows:</p> <p><i>“The outer edges of The Furlong itself are lined with trees and a small park – a simple grass space with large trees, somewhat removed from popular circulation. Re-establishing and enhancing the diagonal path, tree and hedge lines along the old drovers’ route would better link the amenities of this relaxing area with the</i></p>

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			<p>the Gateway Square through recreating the green route down through the Furlong car park.” It is suggested that this paragraph is deleted.</p> <p>4.1.28 The last sentence of this paragraph supports the Town Council’s view that the new retail opportunity site identified in the Sites and Development Management DPD should be located in the southern part of the Furlong Car Park fronting Meeting House Lane to ensure that any new shops would be as close to the town centre as possible.</p>	<i>new gateway square.</i>
	26	Dennis Whitfield	<p>Please do not allow further development of the Furlong Centre. It has, without question had a dramatic effect on the distinctiveness of the Town centre. So many believe that this new shopping area is all that Ringwood offers, to the detriment of the High Street.</p> <p>If you wish to really see distinctiveness within the Town Centre, rid it of the prospect of becoming yet another 'corporate owned' Town.</p>	The document is not intended to prevent development or restrict the owners to independent shops alone. Alterations to the text in respect of the shopping have been made partly in response to this comment. Please see notes above referring to paragraph 4.1.11 (now 4.1.16) and additionally at 4.1.19.
Character Area2 - The Victorian/ Edwardian Quarter				
	02	Chris Treleaven	A particularly helpful analysis and guidance.	Comment is supportive – no response needed
	10	Ringwood Town Council	4.2.17 A subjective view of Carvers and a lot of unnecessary text. Carvers was acquired by the Town Council as a sports ground for local people. What is required is sympathetic landscaping along its boundaries, but this is not made clear.	Agree that what is required is a sympathetic landscape treatment along the boundaries. Proposed re-wording to read: <i>“Open sports pitches, as a swathe of grass for sports use, the recreation ground serves as a gap separating the town centre from the later suburban east of the town. A strip of trees and hedge partially</i>

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			<p>4.2.20 The Town Council was instructed by Natural England on the planting in this area. The sentence beginning “It is perhaps unfortunate....” should be deleted.</p> <p>p62 Build up of building line – there is no Mulberry Road in Ringwood. This should be School Lane.</p>	<p><i>screens the rear of an industrial area. Paths allow limited routes and access while chain link fence and utilitarian boundaries do nothing to make the space inviting as an amenity. Undoubtedly, a vital sports resource, there are opportunities here to offer a combination of green amenity and pleasant connections between neighbourhoods. There is a lack of amenity or character exacerbated by neighbouring buildings and boundaries where they provide a poor edge to the north and east sides. Sympathetic planting and well designed buildings offering natural surveillance, would improve the space. Skyline and horizon are important considerations in the design of any new neighbouring development”.</i></p> <p>The plants are not only non native and therefore of dubious wildlife benefit but they are alien in the landscape. The text remains relevant as the character of the landscape is as important (and in this case more important) than the architecture of buildings in the distinctiveness of a place. In the interests of giving more helpful guidance, it is proposed to add the words <i>“Replacement with native species, appropriate to the local landscape would improve biodiversity as well as helping to repair the rural edge”.</i></p> <p>The reference was in fact intended to be to Nursery Road – the text has been corrected accordingly.</p>
Character Area 3 - Gravel Lane				
CA3	02	Chris Treleaven	Again, a clear definition of what constitutes distinctive local character worthy of important recognition for compatible future development. In this section, the Document does not hesitate to point out what might destroy the character of this area – in	Noted. No change proposed.

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			<p>particular the terraced residential buildings in Gravel Lane, as depicted in Fig. 3.6 and commented on in para. 4.3.8. (A development which may have been allowed on Appeal?)</p> <p>One wishes such clear indication of what <u>not</u> to do should have appeared elsewhere in this Document - for example:-</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Close developments referred to above, • the Mansfield Road entrance to the Town • ribbon development along the southern Christchurch Rd entrance to the Town • the increasing introduction of harsh surfaces such as brick boundary walls in semi-rural roads 	
	10	Ringwood Town Council	p73 It should be noted that Dr Little Gardens is well used by local residents, and the wall was reduced in height in order to improve visibility into the open space to make it a safer and more attractive green area.	Noted. Nevertheless, the wall alteration impacts considerably upon the character of the space. Paragraph re-worded to read: <i>“a quiet walled arboretum with amenity value somewhat limited by its shadiness and views of an insensitive wall alteration along its whole boundary”</i> .
Character Area 4 – Northern Approach				
CA4	02	Chris Treleaven	<p>1) An important analysis, which on the face of it, could look as if it was trying to gain some retrospective character merit from what might be considered as ribbon development. However, the deserved celebration of Hurst Road for example as “creating a sense of a rural hamlet” might well provide guiding principles for layout and landscape in any future “edge of town” developments.</p> <p>(This point is also made in Character Area 5 on p84 and Fig 5.2 - “An outlying hamlet?” although perhaps less successfully there in establishing local character of merit than Hurst Road).</p> <p>2) “A transitional zone/Old Railway Yard environs” paras</p>	Unclear what is meant here. Ribbon development is what characterises the historic core of the town. It is not per-se a bad thing.

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			4.5.9 to 4.5.13. A particularly useful assessment – including both positive and negative features – in view of the (eventually) proposed redevelopment of the old Wellworthy site.	Comment is supportive – no response needed
	10	Ringwood Town Council	4.4.9 The District Council is responsible for the green in Hurst Road. Rather than wondering why it is left as long grass in writing, this is an issue that could be solved internally. The sentence beginning “Given the attractiveness ...” should be deleted.	The text remains relevant to highlight the importance of the green but has been re-worded to read: <i>“Given the attractiveness of this group and its green setting, it is worth improving the green, where children could play.”</i>
Character Area 5 – Southern Approach				
	01	Ringwood Society	<p>Re paras 4.5.6 & 4.5.7 - ...” builder not having the prescience to have anticipated the growth” ..(of cars). We think this is unnecessary and indeed many people are still underestimating the impact of vehicles. The piece of open land needs to be redesigned but it must accommodate the vehicles that need to be parked there otherwise they will be parked elsewhere and cause more issues. The vehicles will not disappear and there would be no point in improving the appearance of the site unless the need for sufficient parking is recognised.</p> <p>We are surprised that the houses 76 – 86 Southampton Road have not been recognised for their local distinctiveness.</p> <p>We also note that no mention is made of Kings Arms Lane...</p>	<p>Agreed – edited and re-worded to read: <i>“.....The effect is distinctly ‘Ringwood’ but it is also clear that nowadays there is a conflict here. The green is over-run with cars.”</i> And <i>“The effects of car overrun are exacerbated by the popularity of off road vehicles which have easier access over the embankments that define the edge of the lower river terrace. Further unrestrained loss of the green or loss of the open character would be detrimental to the town at a point where the townscape is so memorable - synonymous with the town itself”.</i></p> <p>76-86 Southampton Road are mentioned at paragraph 4.3.5 and highlighted on the map.</p> <p>Kings Arms Lane is one of several examples of the narrow lanes and alleys that characterise the area between Bickerley and the main shopping streets. The paragraph (now 4.1.27) has been amended to read:</p> <p><i>“These winding paths and snickets referred to above connect vehicle access points, yards and streets up to a variety of historic and modern buildings accommodating residential uses and small businesses in seemingly equal number. Each route is marked on the</i></p>

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		or The Close. The latter is of importance as it is likely that there will be significant development in this area.	<p><i>plan and each has its own character. Three examples of such routes are given below but each is important and collectively they define the character of much of the town centre away from the central streets". 'Paths, alleyways and snickets' have been added to the key defining elements section.</i></p> <p>The Close has been added to the descriptions for Character Area 1</p>
	02	Chris Treleaven	As elsewhere, a very thorough appraisal leading to well argued guidance supplements	Comment is supportive – no response needed
	03	HCC (Strategic Environment)	<p>Southern Approaches NFDC TCA5</p> <p>We will keep our TCAs of 3a and 4 where you have a single area 5 because of the land use differences (employment/industrial and residential).</p>	Agreed. It is proposed to extend area 5 to take in the two cottages that create a highlight to the south.
	10	Ringwood Town Council	<p>p83 Character Area 5 - No mention is made of the character of the area south of Moortown; for example the church, Manor House, old school and farm buildings are all locally distinctive buildings. If they are to be excluded, there should at least be some acknowledgment in the document to the fact that the character areas do not follow the parish boundary.</p> <p>Fig 5.3 The photograph caption incorrectly refers to "the old Nags Head Inn", when in fact it should be the Copper Kettle.</p>	<p>This is now clarified acknowledging the limitations of the area covered at paragraph 1.5</p> <p>Correction noted. The current photograph is of the Old Copper Kettle, the Nags Head is the cottage next door to it and is shown in the historic maps. Whilst both are important in terms of their historic form and character they give to the area, the Nags Head in particular has a strong element of social heritage worth recording here.</p>

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				<p>Note for information:</p> <p>Thanks to Mary Baldwin for confirmation of this. She says “ the white building on the left of the photo is the Copper Kettle which is directly opposite Moortown Lane. The Old Nags Head is the cottage shown on the right of the photo. It is shown as the Nags Head House & Garden Tithe no 1347 on the 1847 Tithe Map of Ringwood, owner John Morant and occupied by Newton Parsons (brewers). The cottage was one of the lots sold off by the Morant family in 1916, when most of the Morant estate in Ringwood was sold. As far as I am aware it remained a small pub until 1938 when the new Nags Head was opened. The new Nags Head closed in 1998 and was quickly demolished to be replaced by houses at Shires Mead.</p> <p>The old Nags Head was never a true inn - it was far too small to offer accommodation, it was only a beerhouse, much used by locals, but just one of very many small pubs in Ringwood. Nevertheless it is all part of the history of Ringwood which makes the town distinctive.”</p> <p>The correct building has therefore been re-photographed and inserted as a proposed correction. The issue of such historic names is particularly pertinent to local distinctiveness often where inns are concerned. This is highlighted in a proposed additional paragraph at 1.16</p>
<p>Character Area 6 – Crow & Hightown</p>				
	02	Chris Treleaven	This section is perhaps understandably brief in so far that there are fewer developed sites or individual buildings than the other Areas to permit an in-depth evaluation. However, it is in this locality – including the area up to the A31 – that any major greenfield development for Ringwood is likely to occur, however	The following paragraph has been added to the end of this section and revised the key defining elements in response to these comments and others received. However, site specific SPD is not currently proposed for the development areas:

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			<p>locally contentious this might be (e.g. Lynes Farm). It is therefore important to lay down those features of Local Distinctiveness that are referred to elsewhere in the Document which should underscore planning policy for this area – in particular the respect for and the relationship to the natural environment of the river terraces and valley side approaches to the New Forest.</p> <p>For example, evaluation of the Hightown Lake estate merits more than one paragraph (4.6.4) to assess how the built environment there respects the surrounding natural landscape, from which lessons for the future might be derived. Features such as the transition from rural to semi-urban, building heights, design of street entrances from the rural roads, building materials selection, adequacy of visual “shielding” of the estate when viewed from distances within the surrounding countryside, resultant traffic volumes and effect on rural lanes etc. might usefully inform a stronger criteria set than those currently composing the Character Area Guidance (pp 98-99). The concept of an “outlying hamlet” used elsewhere in this Document may have relevance eventually in this locality.</p> <p>It is understood of course that any major greenfield development in this Area should prompt a site specific Supplementary Planning Document (as probably? will occur for the Crow Lane West site “RING3”), but it is important to establish the overall parameters of “distinctiveness” at this early stage.</p>	<p>“Rural Edges</p> <p><i>4.6.9 The edges of development west of Eastfield Lane and south of Hightown Road are abrupt boundaries where housing or industrial building and curtilage lies along exposed field boundaries with only occasionally strips of tree planting attempting to hide buildings. Such planting is often alien in itself as the grouping or species of trees (typically conifers) appears unusual in the wider landscape. Development around Hightown Lake is more successful in this respect in the way tree groups, pockets of planting and small open spaces create a softer rural edge (albeit assisted by water – see fig 6.1). New development in this area needs to recreate a more sympathetic rural edge in this way – screening with trees is not generally appropriate”.</i></p> <p>Key Defining elements</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Wide views big skies - Views afforded across wide flat fields a highly characteristic landscape type (emphasised by the isolated dwellings marked on the plan).</i> • <i>Rural tranquility and green character along the older pre-car lanes</i> • <i>Occasional historic buildings dotted along the older rural lanes</i> • <i>Consistency in the forms of contemporaneous groups of buildings away from the lanes.</i>
	10	Ringwood Town Council	4.6.6 The statement relating to Hightown Gardens that “cul-de-sac ends offer important views out onto ... open areas of countryside” will become irrelevant when the site to the south is developed. This comment, in respect of Hightown Gardens,	It will become all the more relevant to make clear what is characteristic of the area so as to help guide the design of new development – no change proposed.

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			<p>should be deleted.</p> <p>p98 Topography – the guidance to “respect the flatness of the landscape” was welcomed and supported.</p>	<p>Comment is supportive – no change proposed</p>
	13	Mr S Alder	<p>I have recently read the above mentioned document and would like to make the following observations, with regard to the characteristics of the area that make it distinctive:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The relatively low level of traffic flow along the road east of The Elmtree public house, although this has increased quite dramatically since the completion of the 'late twentieth century housing development' to which you refer. 2. The lack of street lighting along the same stretch of road to which I refer above 3. The lack of large housing developments with the same style of houses 4. The lack of any industrial development 5. The clear distinction between the rural local roads and the main arterial route of the A31 6. The large number of horse riders, walkers and cyclists that make their way through the lanes to gain access to the open forest 	<p>Noted. A section has been added on the character of the lanes themselves (see below) together with the additional sections regarding rural edge (see above):</p> <p><i>4.6.10 The rural edge is also characterised by use of the rural lanes themselves. For instance the older rural lanes are important for horse riding, walking and cycling. Lighting, signage and road marking is unobtrusive and low key. Together with remnant field hedgerows, verges and views of the open countryside, these are important and should be taken into account when designing layouts for any new development.</i></p>
	14	Mrs J Alder	<p>I have recently read the above mentioned document and would like to make the following observations, with regard to the characteristics of the area that make it distinctive:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The relatively low level of traffic flow along the road east of The Elmtree public house, although this has increased quite dramatically since the completion of the 'late twentieth century housing development' to which you refer. 2. The lack of street lighting along the same stretch of road to which I refer above 	<p>Noted. See above</p>

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			<p>3. The lack of large housing developments with the same style of houses</p> <p>4. The lack of any industrial development</p> <p>5. The clear distinction between the rural local roads and the main arterial route of the A31</p> <p>6. The large number of horse riders, walkers and cyclists that make their way through the lanes to gain access to the open forest</p>	
	15	Wendy Bell	<p>Crow Lane should not take all of the traffic from the proposed new buildings, access to and from this proposed new estate should be shared with surrounding areas eg. Hightown Gardens and Eastfield Road and Crow Arch Lane. The added traffic will detract from the rural tranquillity and characteristics of Hightown Road / Crow Lane that we must insure remains in place. The rural character of Hightown Road / Crow Lane.ref character area 6,is enhanced by the absence of street lighting and should be kept free of street lighting.</p> <p>Crow Lane should also be kept free of uncharacteristic road layouts and road signs as this will also destroy the rural settings.</p> <p>I wish to have my views known on your survey reference Character Area 6. I live in Crow Lane and ask that in view of the proposed building in my area consideration be taken to retain the rural settings. The excess traffic should be shared with other roads like Highfield Gardens and Crow arch lane and that Crow lane should remain the same without roundabouts, extra road markings, road signs bollards etc and part of the peace and tranquillity of Crow Lane is the absence of intrusive street lighting.</p> <p>I hope you have many suggestions and that they can all be met some degree..</p>	<p>Noted. It is beyond the scope of this document to set out parameters for traffic flows. Rather in redesigning any new development, local character and identity needs to be taken into account and we have therefore added to the section describing Character Area 6 to take account of these points (see above).</p> <p>Some changes would be necessary to make highways safe for any new development but such development should also respect what is locally distinct. In addition to the above, the list of the Key Defining Elements has therefore also been strengthened as follows:</p> <p>“Key Defining elements</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Wide views big skies - Views afforded across wide flat fields a highly characteristic landscape type (emphasised by the isolated dwellings marked on the plan).</i> • <i>Rural tranquillity and green character along the older pre-car lanes.</i> • <i>Occasional historic buildings dotted along the older rural</i>

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				<p><i>lanes</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Consistency in the forms of contemporaneous groups of buildings away from the lanes.</i> <p>Green Infrastructure</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Hedgerows</i> • <i>Footpath link along alignment of railway</i> • <i>Open farmland</i> • <i>Lake and its well vegetated surroundings</i> • <i>Corridors of older pre-car lanes the edges of which include verges, hedges, ditch and deep set front gardens.”</i>
	16	Myriam Fernando	<p>4.6.4</p> <p>The area of land at the end of Forest Lake Avenue adjacent to the Forest Lake was designated public open space as part of the planning consent to develop the adjoining estate. There has been no effort to maintain this space, subsequently it has been allowed to deteriorate into an overgrown area used principally for parking cars. As the only area of public open space serving this estate, this land should be restored to its intended use. The document should this aim as one of its objectives.</p> <p>4.6.5</p> <p>The development of large-scale housing estates with cul de sac form accessed only by Hightown and Crow Lane has resulted in</p>	<p>Lack of maintenance of that piece of land is unfortunate but outside the scope of this document. However, the respondent’s concern has been passed to NFDC’s Public Open Space coordinator.</p>

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			<p>poorly connected neighbourhoods that have encouraged car dependency and dramatically increased traffic levels on the these Lanes. The speed and traffic level on Hightown and Crow Lanes has greatly diminished the rural qualities and attractiveness of this area.</p> <p>These problems have been compounded by the conflicting uses of these lanes that arise due to the proximity of to the open countryside. Horse riders, cyclists and agricultural vehicles all have to compete with cars and lorries for space, resulting in a tense environment and accidents.</p> <p>While this problem has been highlighted in paragraph 4.7.12 with regard to the adjoining Eastfield Lane, it has not been addressed at all in the proposed document for Hightown and Crow Lane. The problem of traffic equally exists for these Lanes and amendments should be made to the document to take account of this.</p> <p>I would like to support the importance the council has given to retaining hedgerows and verges on these lanes, both aesthetically and as a valuable nature corridor. Where changes to the road layout are made, these should take account of these factors and avoid using inappropriate and incongruous features, in particular roundabouts.</p>	<p>Noted.</p> <p>Noted, see above responding to similar comments.</p> <p>Noted. Additional text proposed to read:</p> <p><i>“4.6.8 Crow Lane itself, in common to some extent with Crow Arch Lane and the eastern end of Hightown Road is a key route between areas of settlements other than the town centre. Traffic detracts somewhat from the more rural characteristics of this lane so that whilst it remains a clear thoroughfare, its curves and green edges are important characteristics that can discourage speed and reduce the impacts of pollution”.</i></p> <p>Comment is supportive – no further change proposed</p>

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			<p>The document should further be amended to note that Crow and Hightown Lane substantially do not have street lighting. This is in part a result of the local community campaigning to ensure that this unattractive and unnecessary suburban feature has not introduced to this area. The proposed document should include the absence of street lighting from these Lanes as an important positive part of their character, with the reduced energy use being beneficial both to the environment and council budget, and ensure that they remain light free.</p> <p>The rural views from Hightown Lane and Noule Lane across Lynes Farm are the only places an eastern view of Ringwood's historic setting within the Avon Valley can still be seen. Poulner to the north has been developed right up to the forest boundary with no open space or rural buffer. As a result the landscape setting and openness of town to the countryside is of particular value here. However the raised ramps to the A31 junction to the north of these fields have created an unattractive and alien landscape feature. The current planting to screen this is inadequate and could be improved. Furthermore future road layouts should avoid repeating the mistake of creating raised ramps in this area.</p> <p>In recent decades housing development has resulted in the removal of large numbers of oak trees from Hightown and Crow Lanes, undermining the attractiveness of the area. As these lanes benefit from wide verges the opportunity for new tree planting should be taken. This applies in particularly to the area in front of the Elm Tree Inn.</p>	<p>Noted. For proposed alterations, see above.</p> <p>The lane is outside the remit of the document but this is important and the comments are noted and area revisited. Markings added to map to highlight views, and also the right of way.</p> <p>We have no photographic records of these. The character is recorded as at present. If further information were supplied the Council could consider the issue.</p>

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			<p>Fig 6.8 –Fig 6.9</p> <p>The area in front of the Elm Tree Inn illustrated in these photographs is in urgent need of redesign. Currently the short section of road to the south east of this area includes a large section of asphalt that was simply dumped for disposal by a contractor. Subsequently, in addition to being an unnecessarily large area of hard standing, the road's construction does not conform to the regulatory standard on this section. Road safety would be improved if the short area of road to the south east were removed, leaving a conventional T-junction. This would reduce the speed of through traffic and improve sight lines on the road.</p> <p>These changes would create a small but valuable area of public open space. With some tree planting, a focal point enhancing the setting of the Elm Tree, a key historic building would be created. This is of added value in an area that lacks much of the historic character and identity of Ringwood as a consequence of the large areas of estate development.</p>	<p>The triangle is part of the rural lane character, so care would be needed to ensure that any redesign does not lose the essential distinctiveness of the setting of this building and the lane. However road improvement proposals are beyond the remit of this document.</p>
	17	Alex Grey	<p>1) The road triangle in front of The Elm Tree Inn should be redesigned to make a new open space area. Currently the road layout encourages speeding drivers from Hightown to Crow Lane by providing a slip road. This is dangerous, as drivers have to pass around a blind bend onto Crow Lane, which the slip road enables them to do at high speed. Last year a rider was knocked off their horse as a result of this road design.</p> <p>2) Removing the slip road would create a larger area of open</p>	<p>Comments noted and alterations to this section are proposed (see above). These comments are supported by the comments of several others.</p>

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			<p>space, improve the setting of the historic Elm Tree Inn, and create a focal point for the local community. A normal T junction would help to slow down traffic passing through in the area.</p> <p>3) The replacement overhead cables in Hightown and Crow Lanes are unattractive. Their removal should be made a planning condition of any future development in the area.</p> <p>4) The verges and hedges along Hightown and Crow Lane need to be protected from future development. They are important for wildlife and contribute to the green character of the area, the loss of any section would damages their integrity in making these contributions. These could be further improved by planting trees along these lanes.</p> <p>5) Hightown and Crow Lanes are free from street lighting. They should remain so, street lighting detracts from the rural and spacious feel of these roads, would add unsightly clutter which would have an unwelcome urbanising effect. This should be included as part of this areas distinctive identity.</p> <p>6) In the past large numbers of houses have been built that use Hightown Crow and Eastfield lane for access. This has resulted in a huge increase in traffic that is now at saturation level, imposing an unacceptable cost on local residents' safety and amenity. The document should safeguard these Lanes from development that would compound these problems by creating additional traffic movements. While the document notes this problem for Eastfield Lane in section 7, it has failed to identify the same issue on Crow Lane and Hightown. Reducing traffic levels in Crow and Hightown needs urgent attention.</p>	
	20	Trevor Pogson	The area as you have noted is very rural in appearance, Hightown Road and up to Hightown Hill has the benefit of no street lighting	Agreed, see above.

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			<p>from Oak Cottage onwards, this is very much in keeping with a rural landscape, further continuation of street lighting along Hightown Road and up Hightown Hill would I feel be detrimental to the areas ‘rural feeling’ and only contribute to further light pollution.</p> <p>Further development of housing needs to be carefully considered, the rural roads and lanes are already under pressure from heavy traffic and increased housing other than perhaps infill would only increase traffic volume. The area is already busy during the peak hours and also suffers badly if the A31 is blocked or congested – a not irregular occurrence. Hightown Hill and Hightown Road in particular are used as a shortcut by the motorists who know the area or use the diversion function of their satnav systems.</p> <p>Other issues to consider would be the possible introduction of roundabouts or other traffic structures into area which would not be in keeping with a rural environment.</p> <p>Also the issue of rainwater needs to be taken into account, the area does suffer quite badly from large buildups of water causing flooding on the local roads and recently even road closures due to flooding. During heavy downpours Hightown Road above the Elm Tree Inn has a small stream running down it as the drains can’t cope! Any further building other than the odd infill can only contribute to further water being displaced from the land and onto the roads and potentially surrounding properties.</p>	<p>Agreed. Comments noted, additions and revisions as above.</p> <p>As with all the other representations, where such comments are outside the remit of this document they are noted and relevant council officers made aware of the issues – in this case, NFDC drainage engineers.</p>
	22	John Stevens	<p>A. It is essential to ensure the rural character and the tranquil ambiance of Hightown and Crow is retained. This has been diminished in the past through excessive development, in particular causing excessive traffic levels in the area.</p> <p>B. The current cul-de-sac form of development that has been</p>	<p>Comments noted and alterations to the section are proposed. These comments are supported by the comments of several others, the responses to which are set out above.</p>

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			<p>prevalent in the Hightown and Crow area has resulted in concentrating traffic flows onto Hightown, Crow Lane and Eastfield Lane to a level that they have not been designed to accommodate, and which has detracted from the rural character of the whole area.</p> <p>C. Future development in Ringwood should be planned not to increase further traffic levels nor to increase further urbanisation of the Hightown and Crow area, as this would diminish its rural character. Any new road layouts should be designed to reflect this rural character.</p> <p>D. The current poor visual impact of the A31 slip road could be reduced by new tree planting along the field boundary. The current screening has been woefully inadequate.</p> <p>E. More trees should be planted along Hightown, Crow Lane and Lakeview Drive to enhance the visual appeal, and rural character, of the whole area.</p> <p>F. The area in front of the Elm Tree, at the junction of Hightown and Crow Lane, is badly designed and is in need of a complete redesign, including new tree planting. The current layout is dangerous as it encourages speeding traffic along Hightown.</p>	
	23	Mrs S Stevens	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. We need to preserve the rural character and tranquil ambience of Hightown and Crow. In the past this has been compromised by over-development that has caused excessive traffic. 2. Following on from this, the cul de sac form of development that has dominated this area in recent years has caused traffic to polarise on Hightown and Crow Lane, and also Eastfield 	<p>Comments noted and alterations to the section are proposed. These comments are supported by the comments of several others, the responses to which are set out above.</p>

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			<p>Lane, to a level that these roads were never designed to accommodate, and which now detracts from their rural character.</p> <p>3. It would be highly beneficial to reduce the current impact of the A31 sliproad, by new tree planting along the field boundary. The trees planted in 1976 have failed to provide adequate screening.</p> <p>4. On the subject of trees, more tree planting along the roads in this area would greatly enhance their rural ambience. In particular this applies to the area in front of the Elm Tree Pub, and also along Lakeview Drive.</p> <p>5. The impact of any future development in Ringwood should in no way increase traffic levels or urbanisation in Hightown and Crow, as again, this would diminish the rural character of this area.</p> <p>6. The road system in front of the Elm Tree Pub is badly designed and dangerous. It needs to be redesigned, since currently it encourages traffic to speed through Hightown.</p>	
	24	Natalie Taverna	<p>Given the amount of poor quality development this area has been subjected to in the past and coupled with the pressures to develop ever more in the future, I think a great deal more attention needs made to this character area.</p> <p>The cul-de-sac form of development may provide quiet areas for the people who live on the newer developments, but it has done so at the expense of the original lanes through concentrating ever more traffic on these roads. The problems this has created have been acknowledged in the document in respect to Eastfield Lane,</p>	<p>Comments noted and alterations to the section are proposed. These comments are supported by the comments of several others, the responses to which are set out above.</p> <p>The triangle is part of the rural lane character so care would be needed to ensure that any redesign does not lose the essential distinctiveness of the setting of this building and the lane. However traffic regulation and road improvement proposals are beyond the remit of this document.</p>

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			<p>but not Hightown and Crow Lane where the same problems exist.</p> <p>Large levels of traffic at high speed cut through Hightown and Crow Lanes, either using the lanes as a rat run, or to and from the newer estates. Unlike Eastfield Lane, which has variations in width and small curves, Hightown and Crow Lane have been widened and straightened by the Highways Authority, increasing speed levels and reducing the one time quiet semi-rural character of the area.</p> <p>Eastfield, Hightown and Crow Lanes cannot accommodate any higher levels of traffic. Previous development of the estates has been poorly designed in terms of taking account of their impact on their surroundings. This part of Ringwood lies at the edge of the countryside with long established patterns of land use. Hightown and Crow Lane are the only means of access between the farmland at Hightown Hill and wider countryside beyond Crow. Slow moving farm machinery and the many horse riders face constant antagonism from traffic when using these lanes, most acutely felt at the bottom of Hightown Hill and northern end of Crow Lane. In the last year there have been recorded animal deaths and accidents with horses on these lanes. Additionally, these lanes provide access routes to the New Forest for cyclists from the town and again further conflicting road use results. Future development should not add to these pressures.</p> <p>The document highlights the positive contribution the wide verges and hedgerows make to the area. This could be further improved by using these spaces for more tree planting, reducing the amount of overhead cables and ensuring street lights are not installed.</p> <p>In particular, the badly designed and unattractive road layout outside the Elm Tree should be revised. This could reduce car speeds and create a small area of open space around one of the</p>	

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			towns oldest and best known buildings. A roundabout however would appear incongruous in this setting and should not be a format that is utilised on the rural edge of the town.	
Character Area 7 – Parsonage Barn and East Fields				
	02	Chris Treleaven	As elsewhere, a very thorough appraisal leading to well argued guidance supplements	Comment is supportive – no response needed
	03	HCC (Strategic Environment)	<p>Outer Suburbs NFDC TCAs 7 and 8:</p> <p>I propose to alter the HCC area 5f so as it incorporates late 20th century development with separate car courts, off street parking and short cul de sacs, incidental small grassy open space adjacent to highway.</p> <p>I feel that our HCC TCAs for the central suburbs i.e. 5b, c and e are still quite sound where you have 7 and 8. 5e - Wessex and Merryweather Estates which straddle the A31 very much reflect the aspirations of the 'garden suburb' style with grassy wide verges, curvilinear streets and 2 storey consistent style estate housing and we have identified this as a separate character area because of its different morphology and period of development to the surroundings. I know that in the NFDC work these estates are a components of the wider TCA of 7 and 8. I propose to update our 5b and 5c and 5e descriptive text in the light the descriptions of your equivalent areas; 7 and 8.</p> <p>I will adjust our boundary to 5b in the north east to more closely match the NFDC boundary character area 8 here.</p>	<p>Agreed</p> <p>Agreed</p>
	10	Ringwood Town Council	4.7.13 Members disagreed that the street lamp is a “minor	The lamp is one of a number of features which offer a sense of history and character of the area.. It may be a landmark for some

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			<p>landmark”, the text and photograph should be deleted.</p> <p>p112 Delete reference to lamps in Key Defining elements.</p>	<p>people but not others. Different people read landmarks differently, and children in particular often remember features and foibles of an area that may be ignored by adults. Despite its poor paintwork, it is nevertheless part of a wider picture where there is little of positive character to refer to.</p> <p>It is proposed to retain the image but at a much reduced size. The mention of lamps is only one of several examples of ‘occasional features’ within the ‘key defining elements’ and therefore no change is proposed to the text here.</p>
	12	David Beardmore acting for McCarthy & Stone	<p>For the purposes of these representations it is not intended to go through every character area but to concentrate on the one that the objector has a particular interest, namely character area 7 – <i>“Parsonage Barn and East Fields.”</i></p> <p>The most striking thing about this area when seen in map form is its considerable diversity in terms of history, spatial layout and building typologies. Even the most rudimentary knowledge of the area strongly suggests that the boundary has been inaccurately drawn, particularly on its western side. This impression is immediately reinforced by the following statement in the opening paragraph:</p> <p><i>“The consistent element of local distinctiveness unifying the whole character area is the persistent awareness, through glimpsed views and often framed road-end vistas of the rising wooded land to the east giving a sense of where one is on the landscape – a sense of closeness to the forest.”</i></p> <p>This is patently incorrect in the context of the western side of the character area where the views are all west and south west in the direction of the town and the Avon valley. The document itself confirms this on the annotated (with photographs) map of the</p>	<p>It is proposed to redraw the boundary to place Carvers Sports Ground outside of this character area since clearly Mount Pleasant is the transition point.</p> <p>Noted. The following re-wording is proposed which when read in the light of the above mentioned boundary change is true:</p>

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			<p>character area which is located at the end of the chapter. Here <i>the “important views/vistas”</i> that are indicated on the eastern side of the character area do indeed point west towards the New Forest. In contrast those at the extreme north western corner all point west and south, in entirely the opposite direction from the forest and what is alleged to be the <i>“consistent element of local distinctiveness unifying the whole character area”</i>.</p> <p>Whilst it is acknowledged that the definition of character areas is bound to be somewhat subjective there can surely be no justification for such an inherent contradiction since this is likely to undermine the validity of the analysis that follows. The map alone further underscores the arbitrary and inaccurate definition of the boundary of this character area by drawing a section of the western boundary diagonally across part of Carvers Field and the school playing field that lies to the south east. Quite how two major open spaces can be accurately divided internally between two separate character areas is almost impossible to understand. It is clear that the western boundary of character area 7 should be more accurately re-drawn to the east of its current position, probably around the eastern boundary of the sequence of open spaces running north from Hightown Road, including the buildings of Ringwood School.</p> <p>If this was to be done it then raises the question of whether the area that was removed should fall within character area 2 (The Victorian/Edwardian Quarter) or a new, additional character area. This is a matter for some further detailed consideration. In any event the boundary line currently crossing part of Carvers Field and the school playing field should be moved west to run around their western boundaries. Carvers Field would rightly be recognised in the analysis plan as an <i>“Important open green space”</i> instead of being ignored as it is in the plan that accompanies the plan for character area 7. These changes are essential in order to</p>	<p><i>“One important and fairly consistent element of local distinctiveness unifying almost the whole character area is the woodland views on the eastern horizon. There is a persistent awareness, through glimpsed views and often framed road-end vistas of the rising wooded land to the east giving a sense of where one is in the landscape - a sense of closeness to the forest”.</i></p> <p>See above</p> <p>Agree with suggestion to amend the boundary line at Carvers Field. Map proposed to be amended accordingly.</p>

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			<p>ensure that the clarity and consistency that this exercise demands would be achieved. On balance the creation of an additional character area along the lines suggested would appear to be preferable since it would more accurately reflect the position on the ground.</p> <p>The sub area entitled <i>“Parsonage Barn Lane and Mount Pleasant”</i> further emphasises the distinct difference of the western part of character area from the eastern section. In describing Mount Pleasant in paragraph 4.7.14 it states:</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><i>“The land here sits a little higher than the surroundings with Mount Pleasant looking down across open green and the new section of Parsonage Barn Lane enjoys a vista across the town to the church tower. Here Mount Pleasant forms the transition point from suburban east side of the town before crossing the green spaces towards the urban edge along Southampton Road.”</i></p> <p>This clearly acknowledges that this part of character area 7 faces in entirely the opposite direction to the eastern section in complete contrast to the claim that the <i>“consistent element of local distinctiveness unifying the whole character is– a sense of closeness to the forest.”</i> In passing it should be noted that Mount Pleasant is described as <i>“a small track developed for one or two cottages in late Victorian times) to join the old Poulner Lane at the site of Poulner Cottage (now a row of bungalows and houses facing the new section of road).”</i> This description may then be set against the townwide guidance offered in section 3 of this document which requires that; <i>“Development should seek to retain visual gaps between buildings.”</i> That an unplanned group of houses built largely randomly in the first half of the twentieth century should then dictate the form of any replacement buildings is a totally arbitrary and unfounded piece of urban design advice</p>	<p>A revision to the entry in the table at section 3 is proposed to read:</p> <p><i>“Development should seek to retain visual gaps between buildings, where they are needed to avoid:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Breaking the ‘rhythm’ of the street; or</i>

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			<p>and if followed could only lead to the stifling of innovation contrary to the clear advice of the NPPF that planning policies should “not inhibit innovative design.”</p> <p>Conclusions</p> <p>The stated aims of the document are broadly welcomed and generally consistent with central government advice on the subject. Unfortunately, the study is founded on a lack of understanding of the principles of character area assessment, namely a tool for recording as objectively as possible the characteristics that recur in a particular area and that collectively give it its distinctive character. Instead the study has attempted to conflate character area analysis and quality thus undermining its stated purpose. The subsequent sections of the document only serve to confirm this, thus undermining much of the potentially valuable information it contains.</p> <p>Whilst section 2 of the document is largely descriptive and broadly accurate it nevertheless seems unable to avoid the temptation to stray into ad hoc policy making. It is impossible to avoid the view that objectivity has been sacrificed by prematurely ascribing a quality or value to the component parts of the study area. Overall this strongly suggests that the study has prejudged the survey findings and has sought to show that the area should not, in general, be subject to policies intended at maintaining the status quo with the design of new development required to produce</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>The creation of an undue sense of containment, or loss of spatial structure of the street.</i> <p><i>Conversely, where a strong sense of containment is important to existing character such as in terraced streets, care should be taken not to dilute this”.</i></p> <p>This is a reiteration of the same comment by the same respondent recorded above.</p> <p>The document states at the outset that there is an intention to attribute some degree of hierarchy to offer a joint adopted statement of what the Council and the local people it represents believe are important. As stated above, evidence is gathered from various sources including first hand observation through walking the lanes, streets and spaces recording on maps and photographs, listening and engaging with local people and further consultation which has actually increased the strength of guidance given in the document in accordance with comments received.</p> <p>The respondent objects to the document in that it has attempted to ascribe a quality or value to component parts of the area. - If the creation of a statement as to what elements of distinctive quality are recognised and valued by local people and especially Ringwood (the document adopted by its elected members) then yes, that is indeed what the document is intended to do as promoted by local and national planning policy (see NPPF paragraph 58).</p>

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			<p>'more of the same.'</p> <p>The townscape typologies contained in Appendix 1 are intended to assist in interpreting section 3 of the document but they are so general that they are of very limited value. Moreover they should not be used in the prescriptive way that they are in the Appendix. They need careful interpretation and refinement on a site by site basis if they are to be of any use in assisting designers and developers to apply the findings of this document. The danger of attempting to identify generic 'elements' of character and identity is made worse by offering guidance on how to interpret them which is likely to lead to a 'one size fits all' approach to design. There is no real scope for fine grain analysis which is vital if true innovation is to be achieved when responding to the design challenge of individual sites and would be contrary to the clear advice of the NPPF.</p> <p>In preparing these representations no attempt was made to analyse all of the proposed character areas. Instead, proposed character 7 (which is of most interest to the respondent) has been examined in some detail. This character area has great diversity in terms of history, spatial layout and building typologies but despite this the document concentrates heavily on its alleged overriding characteristic as being the views towards and influence of the forest. It is obvious that this inaccurate assessment stems from a failure to define the boundary of this character area with rigour and due regard to the available evidence. The same may be true of other areas but the clear inconsistencies in this particular character area (7) suggest that all of them may need to be carefully re-examined.</p>	<p>It is important to note that there is no intention to stifle innovative design or seek to merely reproduce 'more of the same'. For this reason we propose a revised element of section 1 explaining the purpose as follows:</p> <p><i>"1.20 The purpose of this document is to improve the quality of new development and to assist in identifying the characteristics of a particular area that need to be appreciated in order to achieve this. Applied properly, the guidance in this document will not inhibit innovative design but will assist by identifying the elements that any design approach must respect.</i></p> <p><i>1.21 Design that respects its context is not simply about conforming to what has gone before. However, those aspects of character which are not valued or examples which undermine the distinct character of an area should not be allowed to unduly influence new designs. All development sites represent an opportunity to improve on the character and identity of a place through either innovative or traditional design solutions provided that they reinforce local character and distinctiveness</i></p> <p><i>1.22 Occasionally opportunities arise to develop an area of land which lies at a transition point or alongside the boundary of one or other area such that there is ambiguity as to which elements of distinctiveness are most influential. In such cases, it will be important to consider appropriateness in terms of the whole context. In so doing, such things as connections, approaches to the site, wider views, and social expectations for an area should all be taken into account in order to realise the potential to repair or enhance an area of townscape which might otherwise appear rather weakly defined.</i></p>

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				<p><i>1.23 This document enables local distinctiveness to be recognised, protected and enhanced when development proposals are considered. It is intended to provide a starting point in the design process by setting out a clear statement of the existing distinctive qualities of the place in question. Designers and applicants for planning permission should take these into account both in their own more detailed analyses and in considering ways to enhance local distinctiveness. Early discussion with the local community and the Council’s Environmental Design Team is encouraged to augment this guidance”.</i></p>
Character Area 8 – North Ringwood				
	02	Chris Treleaven	As elsewhere, a very thorough appraisal leading to well argued guidance supplements	Comment is supportive – no response needed
	10	Ringwood Town Council	4.8.11 Members felt that the use of the word “tension” in the first sentence was incorrect. Open space has many uses (play, recreation and amenity) and there is a need to accommodate all; indeed the uses can complement each other. This paragraph should be rewritten.	<p>The word ‘tension’ is correctly used but in the light of the additional comments the paragraph has been re-written as:</p> <p><i>“There is often tension between the value of such spaces for amenity and concern over children playing on them to the extent of creating disturbance. These are valuable assets for our children and for visual amenity. Neither amenity nor play value is fully realised but the spaces remain extremely valuable as setting for the buildings and should be retained and enhanced where possible. There is also a tension between their amenity value and the desire to park cars. Open spaces have many uses (play, recreation and green amenity) there is a need to accommodate these uses such that they complement each other. Occasionally it is possible to accommodate car use but care should be taken not to remove or detract from such amenity value”.</i></p>

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Character Area 9 – Poulner and the Rural Edge				
	02	Chris Treleaven	As elsewhere, a very thorough appraisal leading to well argued guidance supplements	Comment is supportive – no response needed
	10	Ringwood Town Council	4.9.8 It should be noted that The Mount is a well-used and popular informal public amenity. The Town Council has previously considered improvements but it was decided to leave it as it is.	Noted. Proposed to re-word opening sentence to read: <i>“An oasis of green, open to the community, ‘The Mount’ is a well-used and popular public area. It remains somewhat isolated and was never fully embraced by the layout of the new streets that surround it”.</i>

List of respondents

		contact
1	Ringwood Society	Jeff Wickens (in conjunction with Chris Treleaven)
2	Chris Treleaven	(in conjunction with Ringwood Society)
3	Hampshire County Council (Strategic Environment)	Mark Wilson
4	Hampshire Buildings Preservation Trust	Pamela Moore
5	Natural England	Mr Jamie Melvin
6	English Heritage	Martin Small
7	Environment Agency	Suzanne Greenwood
8	New Forest National Park Authority (Policy)	Helen Patton
9	New Forest National Park Authority (Conservation)	Anne-Marie Lomax
10	Ringwood Town Council	Jo Stannard
11	Ellingham Harbridge & Ibsley Parish Council	Natasha Mackenzie
12	David Beardmore acting for McCarthy & Stone	David Beardmore (Beardmore Urban)
13	Mr S Alder	
14	Mrs J Alder	
15	Wendy Bell	(arrived in two parts)
16	Myriam Fernando	
17	Alex Grey	
18	Valerie Harbour	
19	Chris Lee	
20	Trevor Pogson	
21	Tony Ring	
22	Mr John Stevens	
23	Mrs Sue Stevens	
24	Natalie Taverna	
25	Patrick Webster	
26	Dennis Whitfield	

Ringwood Local Distinctiveness Supplementary Planning Document

Summary of proposed changes to maps following public consultation

The following changes are proposed in response to comment and feedback during the public consultation period, in order to correct errors and to improve the clarity and consistency of the document, and in one instance to correct the accidental omission of a small group of trees on School Lane (noticed on a further site visit) by including them on the map for Character Area 2.

Fig 1 Correct typographic errors: 'accommodate' (x4) and 'fording/bridging point'.

Fig 2. Boundaries between character areas to be changed in response to comments as follows:

1. Between area 1 and 2, the boundary where it was proposed to run along The Close would instead run along Mansfield Road, allowing The Close to be contained entirely within Character Area 1.
2. Between area 2 and 7, the boundary where it was proposed to run across Carvers Sports Ground, the school's and leisure centre's sports fields would instead run along the eastern edge of these allowing the open spaces to lie within Character Area 2.
3. Between area 3 and 7, whereas the draft showed the small pocket of open space to the north of Carvers and Southampton Road to be divided, it is proposed to amend this to place it all within Character Area 3
4. The southern tip of character area five did not include the two houses which are described and photographed in the text. This was an error, highlighted by a question at consultation and it is now proposed to extend the boundary to include the dwellings referred to.
5. Between character areas 6 and 7, the boundary was proposed along a field boundary. Comments have raised the importance of views and a footpath from Nouale Lane and it has also been suggested that the boundary would better define the character areas if it ran along the rear garden edges of Eastfield Lane. This is now proposed.

Character Area 1 map

- A. Move boundary in accordance with fig 2 to include The Close and therefore to add colour but altering it to red denoting the Catholic Church as a key building since it was shown orange in error on the draft.
- B. Add street name to The Close.
- C. Alter captions to provide the correct figure and paragraph numbers with reference to the top right and middle right photographs.

- D. Add red colour to denote the war memorial as a key feature (omitted in error from the draft).

Character Area 2 map

- A. Revise the boundary to exclude The Close, in accordance with fig 2.
- B. Delete orange colour from the Catholic Church on The Close.
- C. Revise the boundary to include all of Carvers Sports Ground also in accordance with fig 2.
- D. Delete the green denoting important tree groups along part of the embankment south of the Bickerley as they were included in error and have been highlighted by consultation comment.
- E. Replace background shading where it was orange (in the draft) with yellow denoting 'Planned connected type street layouts'.
- F. Add yellow background shading omitted in error to Woodstock Lane, Nursery Road and The Quomp for consistency.
- G. Add green shading denoting a small tree group which was missed in error on the corner of School Lane and Middle Lane.
- H. Move 'Woodstock Lane' caption title in particular as it is separated from its description but rearrange captions generally to place them with their text on the right hand side of the map.
- I. Add red colour denoting the School as a key building. This building is highlighted in the text but omitted in error from the map

Character Area 3 map

- A. Amend boundary to include all POS in the corner between Southampton Road and the A31 in accordance with the revisions to Fig 2. Also add blue arrows to denote views from the greenspace towards the corner of Mount Pleasant and Parsonage Barn Lane and include the green notation for trees.
- B. Amend caption to the Furlong to read "Formerly an open green...." since it made no sense otherwise.

Character Area 4 map

- A. Add pink colour to denote pre-car lane (labelled) along the route of the old Salisbury Road (for consistency).
- B. Add footpath arriving from Gravel Lane, described in the text but omitted from the draft map in error.
- C. Add yellow colour to denote planned connected streets for the oval of Hurst Road (for consistency).

Character Area 5 map

- A. Extend boundary to include the two dwellings referred to at fig 5.2 and in the caption at the far south of the area. This in accordance with the alterations on Fig 2.
- B. Alter the caption spot for the former Nags Head to align correctly with the orange building next door and to the north of that shown in error on the draft map. Also replace the photograph with the correct one.
- C. Correct the main route arrow labelled as being 'To Town Centre'.

Character Area 6 map

- A. Extend the boundary up to A31 in accordance with proposed alterations to Fig 2.
- B. Add the footpath running west from Nouale Lane
- C. Add important views as blue arrows pointing from the footpath and Nouale Lane towards the eastern edge of the town.
- D. Revise footpath arrow heads for consistency
- E. Revise the colour from red to orange of the building north of Hightown Road to accord with revisions in the text.
- F. Remove the arrow head shown crossing Crow Lane in the south so that the arrow should join up with the path shown to the north west (to simplify the drawing).
- G. Add a photograph of a view of the eastern edge and annotate it "View of eastern edge of Ringwood".

Character Area 7 map

- A. Alter the boundaries on both east and western edges in accordance with Fig 2 and if this makes it possible, increase the map scale.

Character Area 8 map

- A. Add background colours orange and yellow to denote planned cul-de-sac groups of houses and planned connected street type layouts respectively, in the interests of consistency.
- B. Alter the boundary shown in the south west corner to accord with the proposed revisions in Fig 2.
- C. Amend the annotation arrow pointing out the 'Timber framed forest cottage' so that it points at the correct building as photographed.

Character Area 9 map

- A. Revise arrow heads denoting footpath connections for consistency.
- B. Add a blue arrow to define the view south towards the red highlighted 'Ginger Bread Cottage' on the corner of Southampton Road and Eastfield Lane (correction of graphic error).