

2023 – 2036



Published by Ringwood Town Council for local Referendum under the Neighbourhood Planning (General) Regulations 2012 (as amended).

A Guide to Reading this Plan

Of necessity, this Neighbourhood Plan is a detailed technical document. The purpose of this page is to explain the structure and help you find your way around the plan.

1. Introduction and Background

This section explains the background to this Neighbourhood Plan.

2. The Neighbourhood Area

This section details many of the features of the designated area.

3. Planning Policy Context

This rather technical section relates this Plan to the National Planning Policy Framework and the adopted planning policies of New Forest District Council and the New Forest National Park Authority.

4. Community Views on Planning Issues

This section explains the community involvement that has taken place during the preparation of the Plan.

5. Vision, Objectives and Land Use Policies

This is the key section. Firstly, it provides a statement on the Neighbourhood Plan Vision and Objectives. It then details Policies which address the issues outlined in the Foreword and in Section 4. These Policies are listed on page 5. There are Policy Maps at the back of the plan and additional information in the Appendices to which the policies cross reference.

6. Implementation and Monitoring

This section explains how the Plan will be implemented and future development guided and managed. It suggests projects which might be supported by financial contributions from future approved development schemes. Finally, it deals with a number of issues which although relevant are outside the scope of a Neighbourhood Plan.



Jubilee Gardens



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FOREWORD

Why do we need a Neighbourhood Plan?

To enable our residents to shape the future of our Town and the surrounding Parish, ensuring a Ringwood-centred approach that is inclusive and benefits our local residents, businesses and communities.

With this Plan, we influence the way Ringwood develops - to ensure a strong and sustainable future for our Parish: with better designed, more energy efficient new homes, enhanced green spaces and greater potential for local people to buy their first home.

The Neighbourhood Plan sets out an exciting Community Vision, to create a thriving Town, enhancing the Town Centre to make it a more appealing place for residents, visitors and businesses.

With the Neighbourhood Plan adopted, the Parish also benefits from increased developer contributions for investment in local infrastructure, known as Community Infrastructure Levy.

What is the Community Vision behind the Plan?

As Ringwood prepares to celebrate the 800th Anniversary of its market charter, our Community Vision is to restore and strengthen Ringwood's status as a Chartered Market Town, making it the heart of civic, commercial and community life in the South-west of the New Forest. We will mobilise its rich array of heritage assets, ambitious businesses, cultural and community organisations. We will strive to revitalise the Market Place and High Street, establishing an inviting open-air space in the heart of the town.

How will we deliver the Vision?

Ringwood Town Council working in partnership with local organisations and community leaders, residents, local businesses, site owners and developers - collaborating with New Forest District Council (NFDC), New Forest National Park Authority (NFNPA) and Hampshire County Council. We will proactively seek funding opportunities to enhance our town.

How can I stay updated and get involved?

Simply send an email to: neighbourhood.plan@ringwood.gov.uk

LIST OF POLICIES

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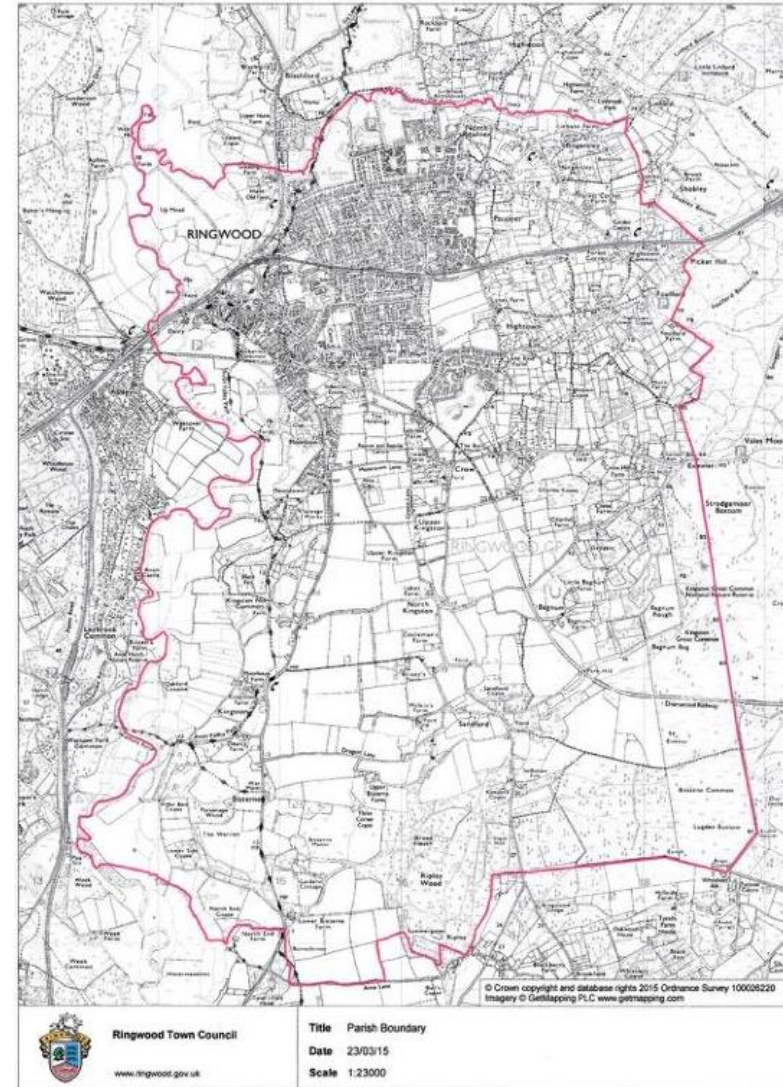
1. INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

1.1 Ringwood Town Council is preparing a Neighbourhood Plan for the area jointly designated by NFDC and NFNPA in February 2021. The Plan is being prepared in accordance with the Neighbourhood Planning (General) Regulations of 2012 (as amended).

1.2 The area coincides with the Parish boundary of Ringwood (see Plan A) and is centred on the built-up area of the town which largely falls within the jurisdiction of the District Council. The southern and eastern areas of the Parish fall within the New Forest National Park.

1.3 The purpose of the Neighbourhood Plan is to set out a series of planning policies that will be used to determine planning applications in the area in the period to 2036. Once made the Plan will form part of the development plan for Ringwood, alongside the NFDC Local Plan Part 1 and the NFNPA Local Plan, which cover the same period, and the extant policies of the NFDC Core Strategy (2009) and the NFDC Local Plan Part 2 (2014).

1.4 Neighbourhood Plans provide local communities with the chance to manage the quality, location and type of development of their areas. Once approved at a referendum, the Plan becomes a statutory part of the development plan for the area and will carry significant weight in how planning applications are decided. Plans must therefore contain only land use planning policies that can be used for this purpose. This often means that there are important issues of interest to the local community that cannot be addressed in a Plan if they are not directly related to planning.



Plan A: Designated Ringwood Neighbourhood Area

1.5 Although there is considerable scope for the local community to decide on its planning policies, Neighbourhood Plans must meet some ‘basic conditions’. In essence, these are:

- having regard to national policies and advice contained in guidance issued by the Secretary of State that it is appropriate to make the Neighbourhood Plan.
- the making of the Neighbourhood Plan contributes to the achievement of sustainable development.
- the making of the Neighbourhood Plan is in general conformity with the strategic policies contained in the development plan for the area.
- the making of the Neighbourhood Plan does not breach and is otherwise compatible with European/UK obligations.

1.6 In addition, the Town Council has demonstrated to an independent examiner that it has successfully engaged with the local community in preparing the Plan. If the examiner is satisfied that it has, and considers the Plan meets the above conditions, then the Plan will go to a referendum of the local electorate. If a simple majority of the turnout votes in favour of the Plan, then it becomes adopted as formal planning policy for the town.

The Referendum Plan

1.7 A revised version of the plan reflecting the recommendations from the independent examiner will be the subject of a public referendum in July 2024. This version of the plan, the policy maps and its evidence base can be found on the Ringwood Town Council website at <https://www.ringwood.gov.uk>.

1.8 Both Planning Authorities have confirmed in their final screening opinions of December 2022 that a Strategic Environmental Assessment is not required of the Neighbourhood Plan as its policy provisions do not have the potential to cause significant environmental effects. They consulted the statutory bodies, which have confirmed their agreement with that opinion. This accords with the requirements of the Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations 2004 (as amended).

1.9 Both Authorities have also confirmed that no Habitats Regulations Assessment of the Neighbourhood Plan will be necessary, as the Plan contains no proposals that may have harmful effects on any proximate internationally designated nature conservation site. The Plan also accords with the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 (as amended).

1.10 Further information on the Plan and its evidence base can be found on the project website at: <https://ringwoodnp.org.uk>

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2. THE NEIGHBOURHOOD AREA



Church of St Peter and St Paul

2.1 The Parish of Ringwood lies on the south-western boundary of the county of Hampshire on the River Avon and on the western edge of the New Forest National Park. Beyond the defined settlement boundary is the South West Hampshire Green Belt. The Parish includes the hamlets of Poulner, Hangersley, Hightown, Crow, Kingston, and Bisterne. Ringwood is also the western gateway to the New Forest National Park, allowing the town to be an ideal touring base.

2.2 The River Avon is a chalk stream of national and international importance for its wildlife communities, particularly aquatic plants and invertebrates, and fish. A range of habitats within the wider Avon Valley are also internationally designated for their wildlife importance for birds.

2.3 Ringwood has a long and fascinating history. Founded by the Anglo-Saxons, it is mentioned in the Domesday Book of 1086 and retains many

features of interest. Its market charter dates to 1226. Historically part of the River Avon was diverted to form the Bickerley Millstream which stills runs around the south of the town centre today. However, the former tannery, mills and breweries that utilised this are no longer in existence.

2.4 Most of the modern area of the town lies on the gravel terrace on the eastern floodplain of the river, the ground only increasing noticeably in height at the eastern fringe of the town as it rises up the escarpment into the National Park, designated in 2005.

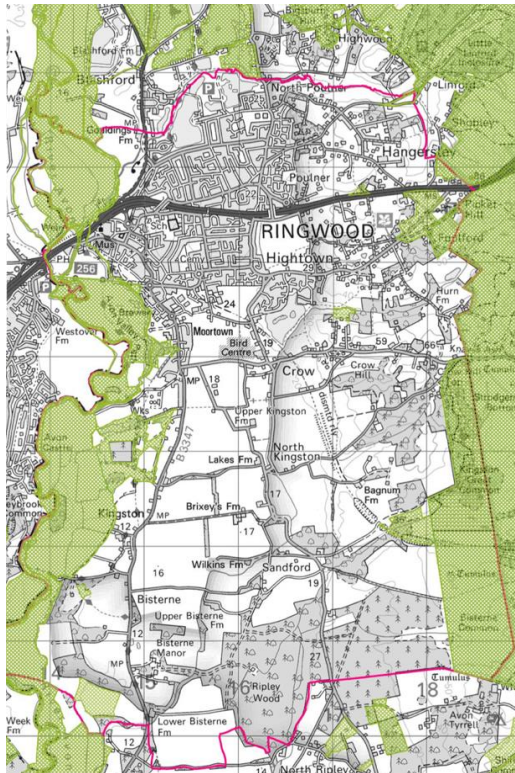
2.5 To the north of the Parish, gravel extraction has created a series of lakes with housing development extending to the water's edge. Historically, to the north-west there was a large lake which is now flood plain crossed by the meandering river and several smaller channels and drains. The flood plain narrows as it passes Ringwood, and this may account for the historic siting of the town, providing an easier crossing point of the river. This crossing point now contains the busy A31 bypass.

2.6 To the south, the valley widens slightly forming the edge to the historic core of the town, contributing to the layout of the town with the road to Christchurch closely following the edge of the flood plain. East of Christchurch Road the edge of the town is less clearly defined; ribbon development along Christchurch Road pushes the suburban area into the countryside. A housing estate south of Crow Lane/Hightown Road also protrudes southwards, with open countryside to the south and west and a large recreation area to the north, leaving it detached from the main area of suburban development. Eastwards, the town abuts a landscape of small enclosures and dispersed settlement which fringes the open heathlands and large woodland blocks of the New Forest.

2.7 Ringwood is well placed on the Avon Valley Path, a 34-mile long-distance walking route that takes you from the Cathedral city of Salisbury all the way to Christchurch Priory on the South Coast. The main road through Ringwood is the A31, which runs west to Dorchester and east to

Southampton via the New Forest. A bypass of the town running directly through the parish from east to west was completed in two stages, the first to the west in the 1930s and the second to the east in the late 1970s. The other significant road is the A338, which goes north to Salisbury and south to Bournemouth.

2.8 The area around the town includes pastoral land and water meadows which give rise to a rich and verdant landscape particularly in summer. There are also areas of arable land in the lower reaches of the Avon Valley.

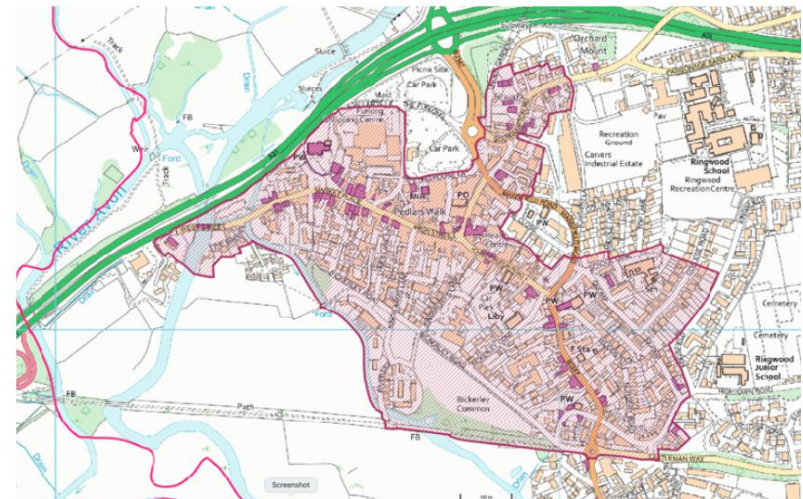


2.9 Ringwood has internationally protected sites to the east, north and west. The map to the left shows the designated areas around Ringwood in hatched green and the parish boundary as a red line. The Avon Valley Ramsar, SPA and SSSI site lies to the west.

2.10 There are also many protected areas around the lakes to the north. Linbrook Lake at the boundary has Ramsar, SPA and SSSI status. Within the boundary, the eastern part of Northfield Lake is a Site of Importance for Nature Conservation (SINC). To the east is The New Forest National Park (NFNP).

2.11 Ringwood town centre has a wide range of shops, restaurants, pubs and cafes, including both local independently run businesses and major high street names. The retail area includes the historic Market Place and High Street, together with the privately owned Furlong Centre.

2.12 Today, much of the town centre is protected as a conservation area first designated in 1970 and expanded in 1983 and combined with the Western Escarpment Conservation Area to the north of the A31 and entirely within the National Park is a mark of the special architectural and historic interest of the Parish as a whole. This status results in a prevalence of historic buildings including 114 that are nationally listed. The listed buildings include 4 Grade II* which are the Parish Church of St Peter and St Paul, the Ringwood Meeting House, Bridge House and the Manor House. Many of the older buildings were first erected as timber frame thatched cottages, later to be re-roofed and faced in masonry or in 3 instances, mathematical tiles.



Ringwood Conservation Area hatched pink with Listed buildings shaded

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3. PLANNING POLICY CONTEXT

3.1 Ringwood parish lies within New Forest District Council (NFDC) and New Forest National Park (NFNP) planning authority areas.

National Planning Policy

3.2 The most recent version of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) was published in December 2023 and is an important guide in the preparation of Neighbourhood Plans. The following paragraphs of the NPPF are considered particularly relevant to this neighbourhood plan:

- Neighbourhood Planning (§29)
- Size, type and tenure of housing (§63)
- Networks of high quality open space and Local Green Spaces (§102 - §107)
- Promoting active travel networks (§108 and §110)
- Achieving well designed places (§131 - §137)
- Protecting Green Belt land (§142 - §156)
- Planning for climate change (§158 and §159)
- Planning in designated landscapes (§182)
- Protecting and enhancing biodiversity (§185)
- Planning positively for heritage (§196 and §209)

3.3 It is important to note that the NPPF provisions for strategic policy setting housing targets for neighbourhood plans to consider delivering (in §67 and §68) cannot apply to settlements inset within the Green Belt. The NPPF provisions on the Green Belt prevent neighbourhood plans allocating conventional housing or other development land (i.e. 'inappropriate' development not exempt by §152 or §153).

3.4 The NPPF is supported by online Planning Practice Guidance, which provides detail on how the NPPF should be implemented. The Government also published its first National Design Guide in autumn 2019 to encourage

better design outcomes from the planning system. The Guide encourages local communities to engage in understanding the character of their areas and, where preparing neighbourhood plans, to prepare design policies specific to their local areas which this Neighbourhood Plan has done. As noted in Section 5 below, the national policy position on how the planning system should be used to tackle climate change continues to evolve.

The New Forest Development Plan

3.5 The Neighbourhood Plan must be in general conformity with the strategic policies of the development plan, which primarily comprises the policies of the NFDC Local Plan Part 1 2016-2036 and the NFNPA Local Plan 2016-2036 and saved policies of the NFDC Core Strategy (2009) and the NFDC Local Plan Part 2 (2014), as well as separate Minerals and Waste Plans.

3.6 The Government's Environment Improvement Plan 2023 published on 31 January 2023, sets out a range of objectives to deliver the commitments in the 25-Year Environment Plan. While the Plan covers all areas of England, National Parks are identified as playing a key role in the delivery of Government agendas for nature recovery, tackling climate change, thriving communities and inclusive landscapes.

The New Forest District Local Plan Part 1 2016 – 2036

3.7 The Local Plan Part 1 was adopted on the 6th July 2020 and establishes the strategic context for the town (outside the National Park) over the next thirteen years. Strategic policy matters affecting Ringwood are prefixed with STR:

- Achieving Sustainable Development (STR1)
- The settlement hierarchy (STR4)
- Community Services, Infrastructure and Facilities (STR8)
- The release of Green Belt land for SS13 - Moortown Lane (STR5)
- Mitigating the impacts of development on International Nature Conservation sites (ENV1)
- The South West Hampshire Green Belt (ENV2)
- Design quality and local distinctiveness (ENV3)
- Landscape Character and Quality (ENV4)
- Housing on developments to include a broad mix of new homes. (HOU1)
- A target of 50% affordable housing to be delivered. (HOU2)
- Retention of employment sites and consideration of alternative uses (ECON2)
- Primary, secondary and local shopping frontages (ECON6)
- Safe and Sustainable Travel (CCC2)
- Energy and Resource use (IMPL2)

- First Homes Advice Note (July 2022)
- NFDC Draft Planning for Climate Change Supplementary Planning Document (March 2023)

Local Plan Part 2: Sites and Development Management 2014 saved policies

- DM1: Heritage and Conservation
- DM2: Nature conservation, biodiversity and geodiversity
- DM4: Renewable and Low Carbon Energy Generation
- DM9: Green Infrastructure Linkages
- DM19: Small Shops and Pubs

Supplementary planning guidance and Conservation Areas:

- Ringwood Conservation Area
- Ringwood Local Distinctiveness Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) (2013)
- Shop Front Design Guide SPD
- Housing Design, Density and Character SPD
- Ecology and Biodiversity Net Gain - Interim Advice and Information Note (July 2021)

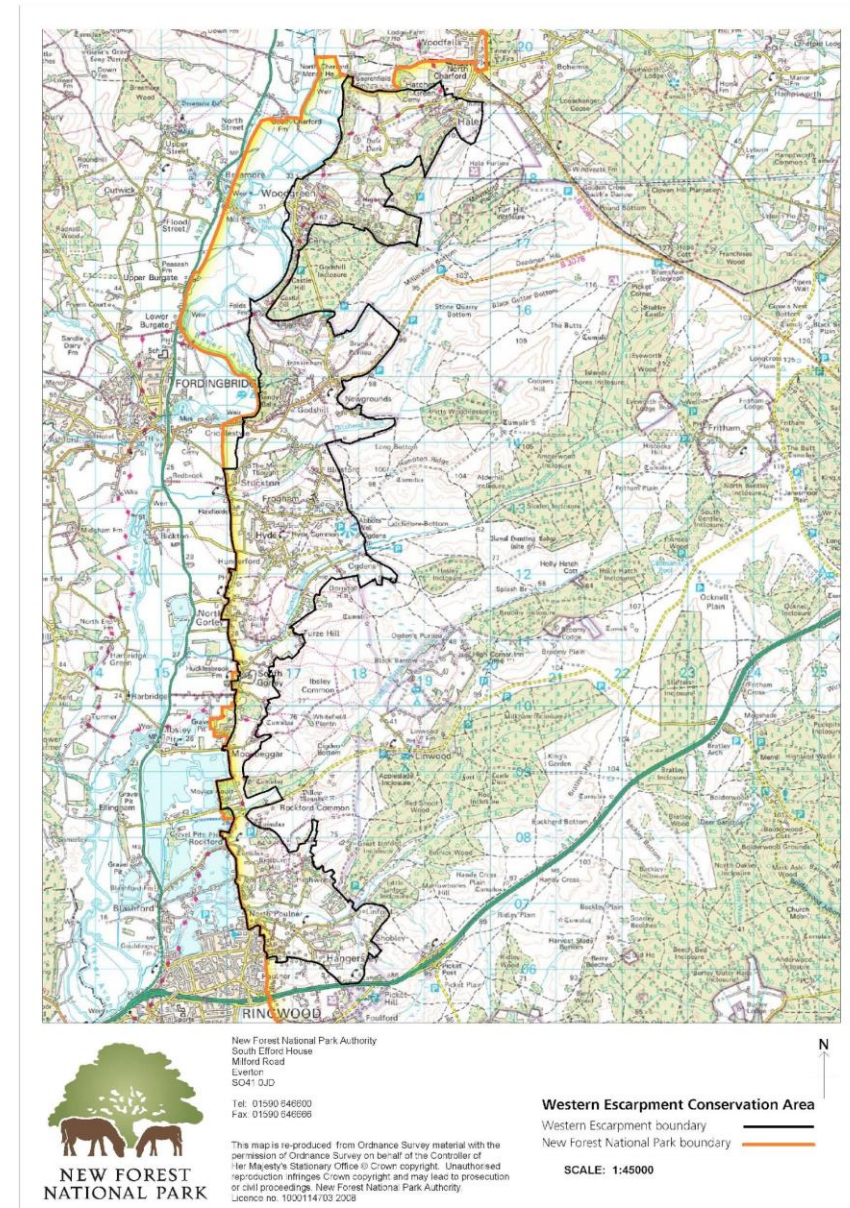
New Forest National Park Local Plan (2016-2036)

3.8 The Local Plan was adopted on the 29th August 2019 and establishes the strategic context for the parish (within the National Park) over the next thirteen years. While not an exhaustive list, the Local Plan includes a number of relevant policies that apply in the rural areas of the parish within the National Park. Strategic Policy matters affecting that part of the parish within the National Park are prefixed with SP:

- Supporting Sustainable Development (SP1)
- General Development principles (DP2)
- Nature Conservation Sites of International Importance (SP5)
- The Natural Environment (SP6)
- Landscape Character (SP7)
- Green Infrastructure (SP9)
- Climate Change (SP11)
- The historic and built environment (SP16)
- Local Distinctiveness (SP17)
- Design Principles (DP18)
- The size of new dwellings (SP21)
- Access (SP55)

Supplementary planning guidance and Conservation Areas:

- Western Escarpment Conservation Area
- Development Standards SPD (Sept 2012)
- Design Guide SPD (Jan 2022)



3.9 The NFDC Local Plan defines the town as one of the eight principal settlements in the District and sets out a strategy comprising the delivery of new dwellings to be built within or close to Ringwood. As required by the NP process, NFDC initially provided us with an indicative housing target for Ringwood of 1300 dwellings for the Local Plan period 2016-36 including the three allocated strategic sites (SS13, SS14 and SS15) with a combined estimated minimum capacity of 850 dwellings. Over this period, it anticipated the rate of new housing development will slow as “development phasing reflects the practical reality of lead-in times required to deliver a near three-fold increase in housing completions” across the District, compared to the preceding Core Strategy. It should be borne in mind that the NFDC indicative housing target for Ringwood to contribute to the fulfilment of the Local Plan part 1 requirement can be met from existing allocations.

3.10 NFDC has resolved to proceed with a full Local Plan Review. In addition there remains uncertainty regarding calculating local housing needs using the standard method given the Government proposals to make the outcome an “advisory starting-point for establishing a housing requirement for the area”. Given this uncertainty, and conscious that Planning Practice Guidance (ID:41-043-20140306) requires the Qualifying Body and NFDC/NFNPA to work constructively together to avoid duplicating planning processes, the NP Steering Group agreed to address housing delivery and allocations under a Neighbourhood Plan review when there is clarity on these matters.

3.11 In fulfilling one of the Plan's objectives, the Housing Working Group has identified and performed an initial assessment of a number of brownfield sites which should be considered as suitable for the development of smaller, less expensive dwellings for future allocation. This assessment work is summarised in the evidence base of the Neighbourhood Plan.

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Plan C: New Forest District Council Local Plan Part 1 – Key Diagram

4. COMMUNITY VIEWS ON PLANNING ISSUES

4.1 The Ringwood Neighbourhood Plan Working Group comprises a cross-section of local people including Town Councillors, local business people, residents and community leaders. At each stage, the Working Group has sought the views of the community.

4.2 During 2021 the following surveys were conducted to gauge the views of the people of Ringwood. These were a combination of on-line surveys, interviews and paper forms:

- Shoppers Survey
- Shopkeepers Survey
- Housing Survey
- Energy Efficient Buildings Survey
- Nature Recovery Survey
- Nominations for Local Listings

4.3 Drop-in events were also held in the Gateway building in 2022 with over 200 people attending. In addition, in 2022, four sessions were held with students from Ringwood School with over 30 students attending. These sessions were specifically designed to gain the views of young people about the future of the town. Across all the surveys and events over 700 residents gave their views.

4.4 The community told us that they loved the history, semi-rural and market town feel of Ringwood. They also defined a vision for the future which is encapsulated by the following:

- a. A more vibrant town centre with character – that stays alive in the evening with restaurants and family pubs
- b. Affordable homes for youngsters and 2-3 bed family homes.
- c. More energy efficient housing

- d. Preservation of green spaces and increased recreational facilities
- e. Maintaining the character of the town whilst also making it more attractive
- f. More for young people to do



4.5 Many people are concerned about the developments on the strategic sites and do not believe that Ringwood has the infrastructure to support this number of new properties. In particular, there were concerns about traffic, schools and access to doctor surgeries. It is recognised that these sites were allocated in the NFDC Local Plan and that the details and impact on infrastructure have not yet been agreed.

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5. VISION, OBJECTIVES AND LAND USE POLICIES

Vision

5.1 The following vision statement has been prepared to guide the Plan's objectives, policies and proposals by the Neighbourhood Plan team:

Objectives

Our Vision for Ringwood.

We will restore and strengthen Ringwood's status as a Chartered Market Town, making it the heart of civic, commercial and community life in the South-west of the New Forest.

This will not be achieved by trying to turn back the clock. We need to make the town centre attractive, appealing and fit for purpose in a new era, reflecting the way we live now.

Ringwood is an historic market town in a beautiful riverside setting and is a gateway to the New Forest with over half of the parish being in the New Forest National Park. We will mobilise its rich array of heritage assets, ambitious businesses, cultural and community organisations. We will revitalise the Market Place and High Street, establishing an inviting open-air space in the heart of the town. We will improve green spaces and create more opportunities to connect with nature across the whole parish.

We will enhance the first impressions of the Town in keeping with the rural setting of the town and to further build a sustainable economy, we will improve connectivity for walking and cycling.

Ringwood will be recognised as a thriving market town with both historic interest and modern-day appeal, it will become an essential part of the New Forest experience for UK and international visitors. The revived town centre will contribute to an enhanced quality of life, and its cosmopolitan appeal will make it an increasingly popular place to live and work, and especially attractive to young people and families.

5.2 The key objectives of the Neighbourhood Plan are:

- 1: To make Ringwood more attractive to a wider cross-section of residents and visitors by revitalising the town centre economy.
- 2: To celebrate Ringwood's historic buildings and townscapes and encourage high quality and sustainable design of new development.
- 3: To put people first by encouraging walking and cycling.
- 4: To ensure Ringwood does not become a 'dormitory town'.
- 5: To maximise the opportunities for the young people of Ringwood to live in Ringwood.
- 6: To ensure that the regeneration of Ringwood town centre positively addresses the New Forest Climate and Nature Emergency Declarations.

Land Use Policies

5.3 The following policies relate to the development and use of land in the designated Ringwood Neighbourhood Area. Each policy is numbered, titled and it is shown in bold font. Where necessary, the area to which it will apply is shown on the Policies Map attached to this Plan. After each policy there is some supporting text that explains the purpose of the policy, how it will be applied and, where helpful, how it relates to other development plan policies.

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Ringwood Town Futures Vision credit SPUD and Daisy Kate

Policy R1: A Spatial Plan for Ringwood

A. The focus for new development in the Parish of Ringwood, outside of the National Park will be on reusing brownfield land and on realising other suitable development opportunities within the settlement boundary, as shown on the Ringwood Neighbourhood Plan Policy Map. The principles of 'brownfield first' and of 'gentle densification' in the town will deliver a supply of developable land over the Plan period that will reduce the need for land to be released from the Green Belt for development.

B. The focus on using brownfield land and for gentle densification will contribute to bolstering and sustaining the town centre's vitality and viability as the primary centre for retail and other town centre uses. Market Place and its environs will retain its special clustering of café/restaurant, public houses and niche retail uses. The local centre at Poulner will continue to help meet the day-to-day needs of the local community in line with '20-minute neighbourhood' principles. Outside the town centre, the residential character of the suburban areas of the town will be sustained and enhanced through sensitively designed high quality infill and plot redevelopment.

C. Beyond the settlement boundary the focus will be on enhancing the natural environment, contributing to nature recovery, protecting and enhancing the National Park landscape and maintaining the essential characteristics of openness and permanence of the Green Belt in accordance with national policies, avoiding inappropriate development.

D. The harmful effects of traffic congestion, especially traffic with an origin and destination outside the town centre, will be tackled through the promotion of other means of moving about the town including the delivery of effective walking and cycling measures to better connect the new communities at Moortown Lane and Hightown Road.

5.4 This policy establishes a coherent spatial plan for the town and its surrounding countryside that shows how its key component parts – the town centre, suburban areas and undeveloped natural areas– will work together to bolster this sustainable community. It accords with the broader spatial strategy objectives of the NFDC and NFNPA Local Plans.

5.5 Critical to the success of the town will be maintaining its identity as a distinct, self-contained settlement nestled within the Green Belt. The urban fabric of the town offers opportunities for gentle densification, especially in and around the town centre area, but also to reuse previously developed ('brownfield') land. Although no significant land has been made available for redevelopment at present, it is likely that brownfield land will become available later in the Plan period and could be addressed in a Neighbourhood Plan review.

5.6 The policy requires proper attention to be given to prioritising and realising such opportunities as they arise, rather than utilize the Green Belt. Not only is this approach more efficient in using a scarce land resource, but it will avoid creating unsustainable patterns of growth, poorly located from established infrastructure and therefore car dependent.

5.7 The evidence collated for the project indicates that the town centre has largely survived the challenges of retailing in the 21st century and of COVID-19 reasonably well in terms of relatively low unit vacancy rates although the works associated with the widening of the A31 have affected footfall. The town centre contains a healthy mix of town uses. Vacancies have increased as independent retailers struggle with this reduced footfall; but in comparison to the national picture, it is still relatively low. The closure of West Street creates less traffic through the Market Place, this provides an opportunity to review how to make best use of this space.

5.8 The parade at Poulner and community, sports and educational uses serve the surrounding residential areas but walking and cycling to these places can be challenging given the rural character of the street network, and the severance created by the A31. The town also suffers from a

disconnect between the parking and public transport arrival points and parts of the primary shopping area. The policy encourages proposals to tackle these problems if the town is to continue to be sustainable.

Policy R2: Maintaining a Successful and Prosperous Town Centre

A. Proposals to maintain the established mix of town centre retail, commercial, community and residential uses within the town centre boundary, as shown on the Town Centre Inset Policy Map, will be supported.

B. Proposals will also be supported which enable the delivery of the Market Place shared space 'vision' and other heritage and cultural led regeneration initiatives that improve access from Furlong Drove¹ and Pedlars Walk, and deliver improvements which 'green' the town centre.

C. Proposals for a change of use that will result in the loss of an active retail, commercial, business or service use of a ground floor frontage within the Ringwood Conservation Area will be supported where all of the following criteria are met:

- i) the proposed ground floor use falls within the NPPF definition of a main town centre use;**
- ii) the proposed use and any associated physical alterations would maintain an active and publicly accessible ground floor use that enlivens the streetscene;**
- iii) the proposed use would not undermine the character and diversity of that part of the Town Centre; and**
- iv) the proposed use and associated works would not harm the historic interest or character of the Conservation Area and Listed Buildings.**

¹ Furlong Drove is the original drivers' route from Gravel Lane through the car park to Market Place.

5.9 Town Centres are sensitive to change and in Ringwood's case, unique historic characteristics within its built environment make the management of change all the more significant.

5.10 This policy defines the town centre boundary for Ringwood which retains the boundary shown on the Proposals Map for Policy ECON5 of the NFDC Local Plan. There has been no change in circumstance to indicate that the boundary should be modified as part of the Neighbourhood Plan. As Policies ECON5 and ECON6 no longer comply with national planning policy and the Use Class Order 2020, they are replaced by this policy. The effect of the 2020 Order especially has rendered redundant the Policy ECON6 definition of primary and secondary shopping frontages and they are not taken forward in this policy.

5.11 It is recognised that some changes of use do not now require planning permission and new permitted development rights (from August 2021) will enable future changes of use from what are now Class E (commercial, business and service) uses to residential uses. The Town Council hopes that New Forest District Council will protect the essential core of Ringwood's primary shopping area, as defined in the Policies Map, from unsympathetic and harmful change by making an Article 4 Direction to remove those rights for ground floor use with effect from the point at which the Neighbourhood Plan is made, enabling such changes to remain in planning control. The Town Council will submit a formal request for this following the referendum of this Neighbourhood Plan.

5.12 In the meantime, proposals made in the town centre will require Prior Approval. For that part of the town centre that lies within the Conservation Area, such approval will require the consideration of any harmful effects to the character of the Conservation Area from the loss of such a ground floor use. Although the Neighbourhood Plan policy (as part of the development plan) is not engaged in a Prior Approval determination by way of S38(6) of

the 1990 Planning Act, the Article 4 Report produced by the Design and Heritage working group makes the case to protect the amenity provided by the commercial uses and historic features of buildings. These have a distinct function and character and would therefore be a legitimate reason for refusing approvals that will harm the remaining historical significance of the Ringwood Conservation Area and setting of the large concentration of nationally listed buildings to avoid unsympathetic alterations.

5.13 It is also recognised that some unsympathetic alterations, which harm the attractiveness of the town centre, the setting of the high concentration of nationally listed buildings and wider Conservation Area do not require planning permission. The Town Council hopes that New Forest District Council will protect Ringwood’s historic town centre by making an Article 4 Direction to remove those rights and to ensure proper consideration is given to potentially unsympathetic alterations like replacement windows, removal of chimneys and replacement roof finishes. The Town Council will submit a formal request for this following the referendum of this Neighbourhood Plan.

[It is suggested that such an article 4 direction would cover the 'primary shopping area' as defined in the NFDC Local Plan Part 2: Sites and Development Management Ringwood Town Centre Policies Map 12A]

5.14 Ringwood sustains a wide range of retail, office, café/restaurant and public house uses, with two important, large food stores (Sainsburys and Waitrose) anchoring the town centre. There are many dwellings on the upper floors of ground floor uses along the spine of Market Place and High Street. The centre is well served by public transport – most notably the bus stand at Meeting House Lane, and by extensive short and long stay parking

at the Furlong and by other public car parks. It is busy during weekday and weekend daytimes but less so in the evenings.



Market Place 'Vision'

5.15 The Town Council is keen to enhance the capacity and quality of community uses in the town and to enhance the evening economy. The Gateway Building occupies a prominent location and the area has undergone extensive public realm enhancements to deliver a wider range of modern community uses. The policy encourages further proposals to come forward that will also contribute to bolstering the vitality and viability of the town centre at the heart of the community.

Policy R3: Making better use of Opportunity Areas in the Town Centre.

A. The Neighbourhood Plan identifies Ringwood Town Centre area for the purpose of supporting regeneration opportunities to deliver retail, cultural, environmental, residential and business investment.

B. Proposals for redevelopment in the eight opportunity areas, as shown on the Town Centre Inset Policy Map, will be encouraged provided they demonstrate how they contribute to the Town Centre Vision and accord with the development principles and opportunities for each area as set out in the Ringwood Strategic Masterplan (see Appendix A). The opportunity areas are:

- Ringwood Market Place;
- Furlong Drove, Meeting House Lane, Rear of 56 High Street and service yard, Northumberland Court;
- Bus stops on Meeting House Lane and the Furlong Car Park;
- Properties to the north of The Close;
- Carvers Trading Estate;
- Pedlars Walk Court
- Ringwood Trading Estate; and
- Lynes Lane Court

5.16 This policy establishes specific opportunities set out in the Ringwood Strategic Masterplan Report (AECOM) to contribute to a prosperous town centre to reflect the community consultation. This policy identifies Ringwood Town Centre as an important location within the town within which are clustered a number of town centre uses, i.e. retail, office, café/restaurant, public houses and community facilities.

5.17 The area includes all of the land whose current use is either in an established town centre use or its reuse for a town centre purpose would be suitable in principle. Market Place/High Street is the ‘jewel in the crown’ of the town. As the oldest part of the town, it is lined with buildings of

mediaeval origins around thoroughfares that would have served important market and agricultural functions in the past. It complements the Vision in providing small, historic units suited to niche retailers, offices and hospitality businesses. Those businesses mean that it could support a more vibrant day and night-time economy. This could benefit residents of the parish and make the town more attractive for visitors

5.18 It also has residential uses that have, in general terms, been successfully knitted in with its tight plot pattern over centuries. Opportunities for sensitive housing infill still arise on occasions and such uses are regarded as compatible with the overall mix of uses as long as they do not undermine or replace an active street frontage. This area is well suited to the beneficial reuse of historic buildings to reap the benefits of heritage led regeneration, although policy R2 seeks to prevent the loss of town centre uses on the ground floors (and permitted development rights allowing for such changes of use do not extend to nationally listed buildings) from commercial to residential.

5.19 Ringwood Market Place – Opportunity Area A

The Market Place is currently dominated by parking and narrow pavements, with cafes, restaurants, public houses and shops present in the many historic buildings of the area. The recent closure of West Street to through traffic presents the opportunity for the historic Market Place to be transformed into a lively destination and events area. The site is located within Flood Zone 2 and as such, a Flood Risk Assessment may be required as part of the planning process for any development coming forward. To be clear, the policy does not allocate this site. Applicants will therefore also need to demonstrate that the sequential test, and where relevant the exception test, has been met. This area is considered to be particularly suitable for:

- i. Public realm improvements and nearby development that contribute to a thriving Market Place by enhancing the historic setting and preserving the open spatial character;

- ii. Creating a more pedestrian friendly public space with active frontages and improved opportunities for businesses to spill out whilst maintaining vehicular access and appropriate parking.

5.20 Furlong Drove, Meeting House Lane, Rear of 56 High Street and Service Yard, Northumberland Court - Opportunity Area B

Most visitors arrive in Ringwood at the Furlong Car Park. The most direct route to the Market Place from here is to walk down Meeting House Lane, however the historically prominent drove route from the car park no longer connects directly to the Market Place. This area is considered to be particularly suitable for:

- i. Public realm improvements that enhance direct visual and physical connection between the Gateway and the Market Place by, reinstating the historic drove route to the Market Place and High Street;
- ii. Preserving and increasing visible shopping frontages on Meeting House Lane and Northumberland Court;
- iii. High quality redevelopment of the rear of 56, High Street that enhances the setting of the surrounding heritage assets;
- iv. Development in Northumberland Court that mitigates the negative visual impacts of the service yard access.

5.21 Bus Stops on Meeting House Lane and the Furlong Car Park – Opportunity Area C

The Bus Stops and the Car Park are well located in proximity to each other and provide a valuable public and private transport space. However, more could be done to provide better active travel infrastructure and to make the area more attractive. This area is considered to be particularly suitable for:

- i. Public realm improvements that create a coherent facility for public and active forms of travel in an attractive and inclusive setting. Forms of transport to include taxis, buses, national coaches, cycles (including secure electric charging), car share parking spaces.

Where possible improvements should include greening and integration of PV panels.

5.22 Properties to the North of The Close – Opportunity Area D

Existing developments to the North Side of the Close (e.g. the BT Building and the building that is currently M&Co) present an unattractive vista to people visiting and travelling through Ringwood. It is an inefficient use of land and fails to mitigate the harm to the urban fabric of the town caused by Mansfield Road. This area is considered to be particularly suitable for:

- i. Development that adopts the principles of gentle densification, incorporate mixed use development which makes efficient use of land and positively addresses frontages on The Close and Mansfield Road;
- ii. Development that includes a high proportion of smaller dwellings.
- iii. Opportunities for road layout changes and improvements to pedestrian and cycle links between the Town Centre and Carvers Recreation Ground should be explored and adopted where possible.

5.23 Carvers Trading Estate – Opportunity Area E

The Carvers Trading Estate is an area of light industrial land adjacent to the Town Centre and Conservation Area. The vehicular entrance is not well suited to high volumes of large delivery vehicles.

This area could more actively contribute to a lively and attractive town. It is considered to be particularly suitable for:

- i. Development that adopts the principles of gentle densification, incorporating mixed use development which makes efficient use of land and positively address frontages to Carvers Recreation Ground and Mansfield Road;
- ii. Development that includes a high proportion of smaller dwellings;
- iii. Road layout changes and improvements to pedestrian and cycle links between the Town Centre and Carvers Recreation Ground;

- iv. Development that takes into account the need to enhance the setting of the nearby listed buildings.

5.24 Pedlars Walk Court, wall by the Inn on the Furlong – Opportunity Area F

On arrival at the main Car Park in Ringwood the routes to the High Street are unclear. The most direct route is to walk between the Meeting House and the Inn on the Furlong. This route is not visually appealing currently. There is the opportunity to improve the sense of arrival into the town by:

- i. Creating active frontages and attractive open vistas which naturally draw visitors through to the High Street and create a spatially more respectful setting for the Grade II* Meeting House.

5.25 Ringwood Trading Estate – Opportunity Area G

Ringwood Trading Estate is an area of light industrial land adjacent to the Town Centre & Conservation Area. Situated on a well-used roundabout it does not currently provide a good first impression of a lively and attractive town. The site is located within Flood Zone 2 and as such, a Flood Risk Assessment may be required as part of the planning process for any development coming forward. To be clear, the policy does not allocate this site. Applicants will therefore also need to demonstrate that the sequential test, and where relevant the exception test, has been met. There is the opportunity to improve the sense of arrival into the town by encouraging:

- i. Development that positively addresses frontages on Castleman Way and Christchurch Road;
- ii. Development that includes a high proportion of smaller dwellings;
- iii. Improvements to pedestrian and cycle links between the existing cycle infrastructure and the Bickerley and the Castleman Trail.

5.26 Lynes Lane Court – Opportunity Area H

This courtyard is adjacent to the primary shopping frontage and also provides a route between the High Street and the green spaces of the Bickerley and the Castleman Trail. In common with the other such links the route is not obvious, however Lynes Lane Court does have retail units that encourage people to venture away from the High Street. There is the opportunity to improve this link by supporting:

- i. Public realm improvements that provide an attractive pedestrian friendly open space;
- ii. Alterations that improve the prominence and attractiveness of Lynes Lane as a link between the High Street and Bickerley, for example by the lowering of high walls.

Policy R4: Shops and Parades within and outside defined centres

A. Proposals to maintain and enhance the established mix of local centre uses at Butlers Lane Poulner, as shown on the Ringwood Neighbourhood Plan Policy Map, will be encouraged.

B. Development proposals that enhance the community function of shops located outside defined centres will be supported.

C. Where it is proposed to change the use of a shop within or outside a centre that falls within the Local Community Use Class F2(a), the applicant will be expected to accompany their application with a robust assessment of its value to the local community.

D. Where evidence clearly demonstrates that a shop does not fulfil a function or benefit for the local community, or where a community benefit exists to changing the use of a shop to fulfil another non-residential community use, marketing evidence will not be required.

5.27 This policy acknowledges the locally important shopping parade in Poulner to encourage its ongoing role in serving the local community. There are also numerous individual shops throughout the Parish outside this defined Local Centre. NFDC saved Policy DM19 (Small Shops and Pubs) seeks to ensure that development proposals do not result in the loss of these shops, particularly where there is no alternative provision nearby.

5.28 These individual shops play an even more vital role in their local community by providing convenient access to day-to-day requirements as a core element of a sustainable '20-minute neighbourhood' (a 10-minute walk there, and a 10-minute walk home), and may be the sole accessible store for less mobile residents. Given their importance to the local community, these individual shops and parades will be supported as they play an important role at the heart of our neighbourhoods.



Ringwood High Street

5.29 If the shop fulfils a function or benefit to the local community, development proposals must provide credible and robust evidence which demonstrates the existing use is not commercially sustainable and at least 12 months of active, visible and comprehensive marketing for its current use before an alternative use will be considered.

5.30 The Use Class Order 2020 includes a new Class F2(a) which applies to shops under 280m² selling essential goods which are over 1km from another similar shop. The policy reflects the principles underlying NFDC Local Plan Policy ECON6 but brings it up to date to reflect these changes since the Local Plan was adopted. The period of marketing reflects the requirement in ECON6.

Policy R5: Smaller Housing

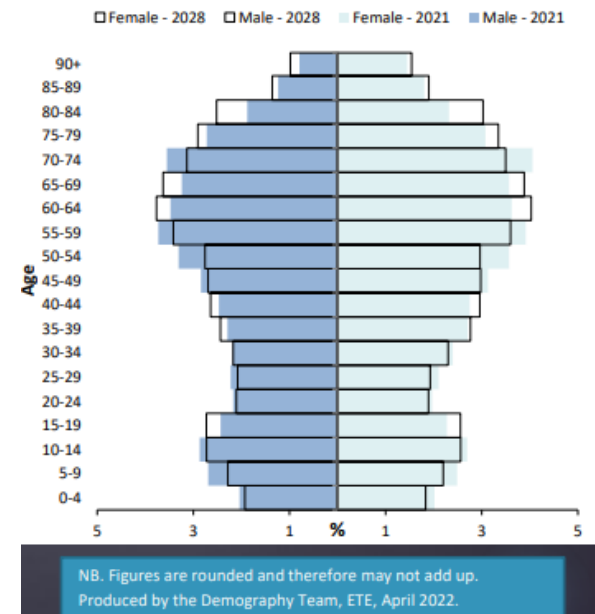
Provision should be made for small dwellings with one and two bedrooms, in schemes of residential development where this can be achieved without detriment to the amenities and the character of the surrounding area and neighbouring properties. The number of small dwellings should be greater than 50% of the total in schemes of five or more dwellings.

5.31 A Ringwood Housing Survey was conducted on-line in 2021. There were 279 respondents. Of the households that responded over 1/3 had members looking to buy or rent a house in the next year and over 80% of these had local connections. 50% of those looking to buy were looking to pay £350K or less. From the respondents' experience, Ringwood is lacking starter homes (1-2 bed), mid-priced 2-3 beds and council / housing association dwellings. There was a split view on supporting a small development of social/affordable housing on a Green Belt site (42.2% for 46.2% against).

5.32 The aim of this policy is therefore to diversify the local housing stock to prioritise two broad local housing markets - single people and young families new to the housing market and retirees whose opportunity to downsize may be limited - and hence the need to satisfy the increased demand for both smaller and lower cost dwellings to generally improve choice. The existing housing stock in the town consists predominantly of three or four bedroomed properties, and market housing and is amongst the most expensive to buy in the country. The average size of private households in the town (i.e. the number of people occupying a dwelling) is lower than in most other parts of Hampshire and is likely to continue to fall. Similarly, the number of elderly households is projected to increase considerably over the same period.

5.33 In addition, a greater number of smaller units can be delivered on a given site than larger units. The provision of a higher proportion of small dwellings (i.e., greater than 50% of the total of schemes of five or more dwellings) will ensure an efficient use of scarce land in the town given its environmental and Green Belt constraints.

5.34 The hollowing out of the district's age profile in the 20 to 40 age group is something the Neighbourhood Plan wishes to arrest. There may be various socio-economic factors at work, some of which are beyond the capabilities of a neighbourhood plan. However, to the extent that housing affordability is an issue, it is important that all possible steps are explored, including the longer-term potential for Community Led Housing.



Source: <https://documents.hants.gov.uk/population/Factsheet-NewForest.pdf>

5.35 A survey conducted with a selection of Ringwood Estate Agents showed that 2 or 3-bedroom houses were in most demand with the level of demand increasing as the price lowers. Until recently around 70% of properties would have been sold to local people but this has now reduced to around 50% pointing to the potential for locals to be less well positioned to buy.

5.36 The provision of a stock of small housing units would also give the elderly an opportunity, if they wish, to vacate their larger dwellings, yet remain resident in the town and provide an opportunity for younger and/or key worker, one and two person households to find suitable accommodation in the area. This is key for the continuing development of vibrancy in our communities and overall sustainability of the town. Better utilisation of the existing housing stock is unlikely to occur unless smaller units are available either by the construction of new, small dwellings or by the conversion of existing properties.

Policy R6: First Homes

Affordable housing will be supported in new development in areas outside of the New Forest National Park as required by Local Plan Policy HOU2. Within that provision, a minimum of 25% of new affordable homes shall be provided as First Homes.

5.37 The NFDC Local Plan Policy HOU2 requires a proportion of affordable units on larger housing sites (50% on sites of more than 10 houses) so it could be considered that there is no need for an additional policy requiring affordable homes in this Neighbourhood Plan. However, the Local Plan was adopted prior to the Governments 'First Home' initiative where a minimum 25% of all new affordable units should be provided as First Homes. These units are likely to be secured through legal (Section 106) agreements to ensure that the discounts remain in perpetuity. NFDC has published an Advice Note on First Homes provision (July 2022).

5.38 'First Homes' are a specific kind of discounted market sale housing and meet the definition of 'affordable housing' for planning purposes. The local housing needs evidence prepared for the Neighbourhood Plan does not consider 'First Homes' to be currently affordable for those households on average or lower incomes but a couple with joint incomes who fall within the 'First Homes' household income limit of £80,000 per annum may well be able to afford a First Homes discounted price dwelling.

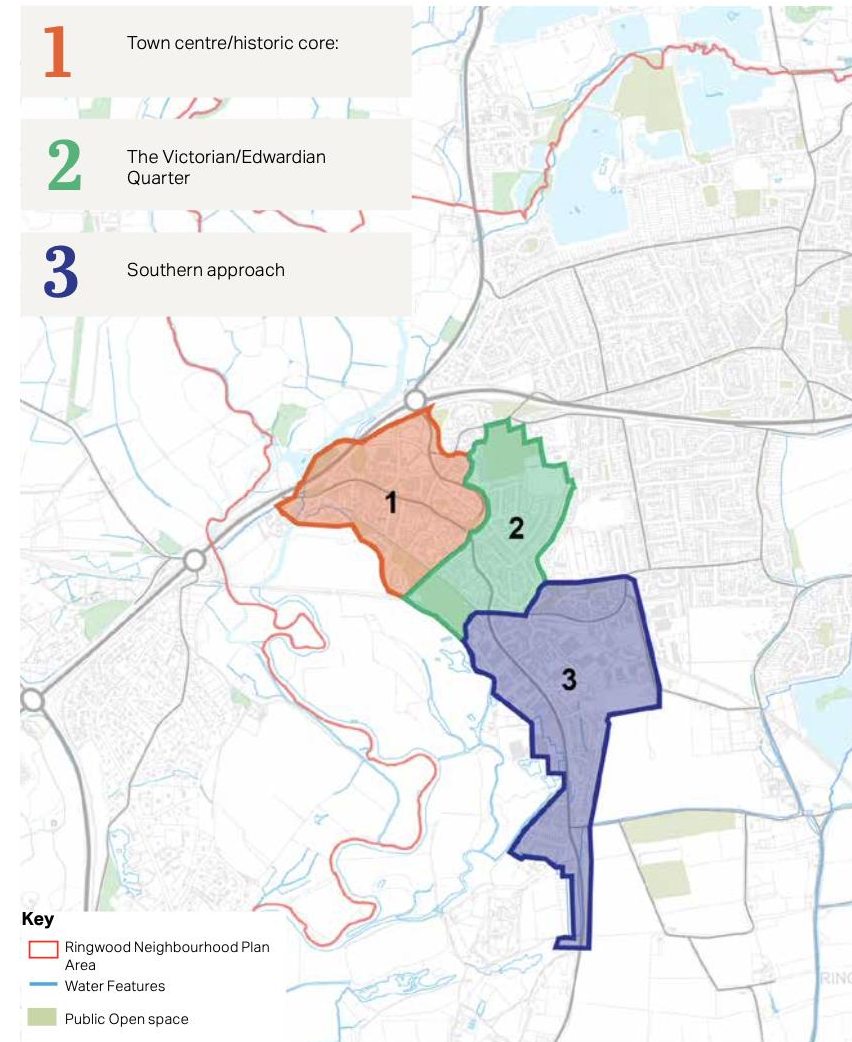


Policy R7: The Ringwood Design Code

As appropriate to their scale, nature and location, residential development proposals must demonstrate high quality design and legible layouts which, where relevant, have taken account of the positive aspects of local character defined in the Ringwood Design Code (Appendix B), and should also:

- (i) Minimise the impact of development on higher ground by careful siting and by comprehensive landscaping;
- (ii) Include on a Landscape Plan the opportunities to create wildlife corridors and deliver biodiversity net gain;
- (iii) Include amenity space having sufficient size, shape and access to sunlight for the provision of recreational benefits to the occupants;
- (iv) Offer highly permeable residential layouts for cyclists and pedestrians moving within and through the development;
- (v) Front boundary treatments should be in keeping with the historic and rural character of Ringwood (DC.03.02 and DC.05.2). Hard boundary treatments up to 1m high will be permitted, where taller boundaries are deemed appropriate (for example, for clear reasons of security or privacy) this should be achieved by planting unless otherwise justified by historic character. Hard boundaries should be permeable to wildlife; and
- (vi) Be respectful of the tranquil setting of the National Park and protective of its dark skies. Lighting should be fully justified and well-designed to shine only where it is needed.

5.39 This policy responds to the Government’s encouragement that neighbourhood plans should set out local design guidance by adding additional local design emphasis to NFDC Policy ENV3 and NFNPA Policy DP18 to provide a compendium of design guidance in the form design guidelines for the parish as a whole, and specific guidance for three character areas – The Town Centre and Historic Core, The Victorian and Edwardian Quarter and the Southern Approach.



Ringwood character area map (The above 3 character areas are based on character areas 1, 2 and 5 of the Ringwood Local Distinctiveness SPD 2013)

5.40 The Code has also brought together in one place a range of guidance published by NFDC and NFNPA since 2003 but only some of which has been adopted as supplementary planning guidance for development management purposes. The Code is an integral part of the policy but is extensive in distinguishing different areas of the town and is therefore published separately to the Neighbourhood Plan as its Appendix B. To be clear therefore, as the Code has been prepared and consulted on as part of the Plan, its content carries the full weight of the development plan in decision making and is not subordinate or supplementary guidance carrying lesser weight.

5.41 Applicants will therefore be expected to have acknowledged, understood and responded positively to the Code as relevant to the location, scale and nature of their proposals. Where a proposal does not seek to follow the requirements of the Code then the applicant will be obliged to justify why an exception should be made, for example, because a scheme meets the Net Zero Carbon provisions of Policy R10 requiring a design solution that cannot fully comply with the Code.

5.42 In respect of clause (v) of the Policy, this addresses a specific issue in Ringwood which since the Ringwood Local Distinctiveness SPD was published has become more prominent, as it has in many other towns. It is widely recognised that natural more permeable boundaries provide benefits including social cohesion; passive surveillance; more harmonised appearance; biodiversity; flood protection; cooler streets and better air quality.

5.43 The Code should be used by developers in conjunction with The Ringwood Local Distinctiveness SPD, which is attached as Appendix C.

Policy R8: Building for a Healthy Life

All development with a residential component of 10 or more dwellings should apply the Building for a Healthy Life (BHL) design assessment tool (or equivalent methodology) to inform the design proposals, based on a traffic light system of scoring. As a guide, development should seek to achieve a score of no ‘reds’, design out all ‘ambers’ and achieve a majority of ‘greens’.

A Building for a Healthy Life Assessment should be included within the Design and Access Statement and submitted with the application.

5.44 The distinctive local character of the Parish and the importance of high-quality design were raised as important issues by the local community both during discussions about the Neighbourhood Plan as well as in response to proposed major developments in the area.

5.45 High Quality Design is fundamental to the creation of high-quality places. The national Model Design Code H2 (para 187) reinforces this:

“The built environment has a significant impact on people’s health and wellbeing. This relates across the design code with regard to walkable neighbourhoods, access to greenery and recreation, attractive buildings and public spaces, space standards, and strong communities.”

5.46 The NPPF (paragraph 40) encourages ‘any applicants who are not already required to do so by law to engage with the local community...before submitting their applications’. This policy also has regard to paragraph 138 of the NPPF and refines and updates NFDC policy ENV3 to align with paragraph 138 and the way in which the process of engaging the local community and assessing the design of major development proposals is carried out. Importantly, it uses accepted means within the District Council’s established ‘[major applications checklist](#)’ to achieve its aims, rather than create an additional process.

5.47 The use of the BHL design assessment toolkit is of most benefit if used as early as possible in the evolution of significant projects that are likely to be of public interest such as large-scale housing and mixed-use developments. The intent of this policy is that there will be a design assessment and review panel for all major planning applications.

5.48 To inform this policy, the Neighbourhood Plan team has undertaken two BHL assessments of local schemes, one ‘as built’ and one ‘off plan’. In both cases the schemes have been found wanting in design terms containing too many ‘red’ and ‘amber’ assessments on a number of fundamental design matters including:

- poor legibility
- too highways oriented with not enough focus on good street design for residents, cyclists and pedestrians
- poor connection with otherwise reasonably well considered green open spaces.

5.49 The Design and Access Statement should describe in its ‘Community Involvement Statement’ how the knowledge of the local community has been sought, positively considered and responded to in formulating the design of proposals. Where a proposal has not accommodated that knowledge, then the Statement should explain the reasons for not doing so.

Policy R9: Creating a Green Infrastructure and Nature Recovery Network

A. The Neighbourhood Plan designates a Green Infrastructure and Nature Recovery Network, as shown on the Nature Recovery Policy Map, for the purpose of promoting ecological connectivity, outdoor recreation and sustainable movement through the parish and into the National Park; helping to mitigate climate change. The Network comprises the town's variety of green spaces, ancient woodland, trees and hedgerows, water bodies, assets of biodiversity value, children's play areas and recreational playing fields.

B. Development proposals that lie within or adjoining the Network are required to have full regard to creating, maintaining and improving the Network in the design of their layouts, landscaping schemes and public open space and play provisions. Elsewhere, all proposals should protect and maintain trees and hedgerows; provide for the planting of new trees for flood management and carbon sequestration purposes; and include hedgerows and bulb and wildflower planting where it is compatible with the street scene. The wildlife corridors should also be maintained as dark corridors as far as possible to increase their value for nocturnal species.

C. The Policies Map shows those parts of the designated Network that are known or likely to have biodiversity value either as habitat areas; as hedgerows or lines of trees; or as streams and rivers. For the purpose of calculating Biodiversity Net Gain requirements development proposals located within or adjoining that part of the Network should anticipate achieving at least a medium distinctiveness multiplier score.

D. The Neighbourhood Plan designates Poulner Lakes as shown on the Policies Map, as a Biodiversity Net Gain offsetting site. Proposals for development that will adversely affect the function of the land for that purpose will be resisted.

5.50 Although the built-up area of the town area occupies a significant proportion of the designated neighbourhood area there are still important areas of historic and biodiverse countryside that surround it to the east and south. The town also has many green spaces and other assets throughout that built up area. Together its urban and countryside assets form a coherent green infrastructure network full of biodiversity, recreational and visual value. In turn, that network forms part of a much larger network extending into the National Park and Dorset. This policy therefore serves a number of closely related purposes aimed at protecting and improving the wealth of green infrastructure assets within the town and its surrounding countryside.

5.51 Firstly, Clause A of the policy defines the nature of that network at Ringwood and shows its scale on the Policies Map. It illustrates how extensive and well connected they are to function as effective habitat corridors, particularly between the River Avon corridor and the National Park. Within and on the edge of the town, green spaces such as the Bickerley Village Green, Carvers Recreation Ground, Jubilee Gardens, Dr Little's Park, The Mount, Forestside Gardens, Poulner Lakes and the lines of street trees and of lengths of mature trees across many gardens are the most significant and extensive assets. However, there are many more extensive areas of green space at Moortown Lane and Hightown, smaller pockets of green space, and field boundary hedgerows in the countryside, that add to the overall biodiversity functionality and integrity of the network. It proposes the establishment of a network which includes two wildlife corridors to the south of the town, one south of Moortown Lane and the other through the Bisterne Estate, based on existing protected areas and connecting features, such as hedgerows.

5.52 Clause B then requires the network to be protected from harmful development and, where possible and relevant, development proposals in its vicinity to reflect its functionality in that location in the design of the scheme, notably the layout and landscape proposals.

5.53 Clause C responds to the biodiversity net gain (BNG) provisions of the Environment Act 2021, which became a statutory part of plan making and development management in Spring 2024. The BNG Metric (currently in its 4.0 version) provides the means for applicants to calculate the baseline biodiversity value of the application site in determining the net gain requirement of their proposals. The Policies Map makes a distinction between those parts of the Network that have, or are likely to have, existing biodiversity value, based on published mapped data and observation, and those that do not. Green infrastructure is multi-functional but some features – for example amenity and formal recreational land – are unlikely to have biodiversity value, or maybe less suited to improving that value by the nature of their use. NFDC already applies 10% BNG to major applications pursuant to Local Plan policy STR1 ‘Achieving sustainable development’, part (iii), with further details in the NFDC interim advice note [‘Ecology and Biodiversity Net Gain’](#)

5.54 Clause C also relates to those parts of the Network of biodiversity value. Given it includes all defined Priority Habitats and semi-natural habitats, native hedgerows and trees and natural water bodies, the clause anticipates that the distinctiveness multiplier score (from very low to very high) will be at least medium.

5.55 Creating a vital green link between the Avon Valley and New Forest National Park is a fundamental objective of this policy. But, the Town Council has been keen to respond to the BNG provisions to plan positively for delivering biodiversity net gain (BNG) in the local area. The Parish Nature Recovery Strategy and Guidance report (published in the evidence base) tested the potential of those sites as it also anticipated they may have significant potential for future BNG offsetting projects.

5.56 The Parish Nature Recovery Strategy and Guidance report has been developed in conjunction with local wildlife experts and landowners and has landowner support.

Policy R10: Zero Carbon Buildings

A. All developments should be ‘zero carbon ready’ by design to minimise the amount of energy needed to heat and cool buildings through landform, layout, building orientation, massing and landscaping.

B. Wherever feasible, all buildings should be certified to a Passivhaus or equivalent standard with a space heating demand of less than 15KWh/m²/year. Where schemes that maximise their potential to meet this standard by proposing the use of terraced and/or apartment building forms of plot size, plot coverage and layout that are different to those of the character area within which the proposal is located, this will be supported, provided it can be demonstrated that the scheme will not have a significant harmful effect on the character of the area.

C. All planning permissions granted for new and refurbished buildings should demonstrate that they have been tested to ensure the buildings will perform as predicted prior to occupation.

D. All planning applications for major development² are also required to be accompanied by a Whole Life-Cycle Carbon Emission Assessment, using a recognised methodology, to demonstrate actions taken to reduce embodied carbon resulting from the construction and use of the building over its entire life. Consideration should be given to resource efficiency at the outset and whether existing buildings can be re-used as part of the scheme to capture their embodied carbon.

E. A Climate Change Statement will be submitted to demonstrate compliance with the policy (except for householder applications). Applicants are directed to the Cotswold Net Zero Toolkit³ for guidance on matters to be addressed at pre-planning and initial design stage. The statement will demonstrate how opportunities to reduce the energy use

² Major Development is defined in Annex 2 of the NPPF

intensity (EUI) of buildings over the plan period have been maximised in accordance with the energy hierarchy. Designers shall evaluate the operational energy use using realistic information on the intended use, occupancy and operation of the building to minimise any performance gap.

5.57 Ringwood people surveyed during the development of the Neighbourhood Plan were concerned about climate change and reducing our carbon footprint. There is strong support for new housing to be built to high environmental standards, especially since retrofitting existing properties is so difficult and expensive.

5.58 Analysis of EPC lodgements in 2021 for Ringwood and the New Forest showed that average energy use per lodgement in 2021 in Ringwood Parish was ~7% higher than New Forest Local Authority Area. The ‘energy use excess’ (2021 lodgement data) in Ringwood Parish compared to the average across the New Forest is ~17.1 kWh/m² pa. AECOM Housing Needs Assessment (Jan 2022) indicated that there are 6405 dwellings in Ringwood Parish. Using lodgement data as a proxy for all housing in Ringwood Parish and the figure of 6405 dwellings, then the ‘energy use excess’ of the parish is around 91000 kWh/m² pa. ‘Energy use excess’ in this context is the amount of energy currently used above the average for the New Forest. This indicates that there is a need for new housing stock to be constructed to much improved energy standards and in all likelihood, residents in existing properties are paying far more for their energy costs than otherwise should be the case.

5.59 Further information in support of the policy is set out in Appendix D. The policy is intended to provide information for applicants which reflects current best practice guidance. The policy complements NFDC Policy IMPL2

³ Applicants are directed to page 16 of the [Cotswold Net Zero toolkit](#) for guidance on matters to be addressed at pre-planning and initial design stage. The toolkit is made available by the Local Govt. Association under a ‘Creative Common Licence’

(non-residential), saved policy DM4 and NFNPA Policy SP1 and SP11 (including footnote 25) which share the same overall aim but predate the climate change policy development at national level over recent years, but where supplementary guidance by each planning authority has not yet been taken forward.

5.60 The policy is in five parts, the combination of which is intended to deliver a step change in the energy performance of all new and extended buildings in the town by encouraging and incentivising the use of the Passivhaus or equivalent method of building design. Along with the initial design stage assessment, it is anticipated that designers will demonstrate compliance using a design for performance methodology such as the Passivhaus Planning Package or CIBSE TM54 Operational Energy 'energy forecast' prepared by a suitably qualified consultant. Achieving highly energy efficient buildings through a process of design for performance will make a significant contribution to mitigating climate change in the parish.

5.61 Clause A of the policy requires developers to ensure they address the Government's climate change targets and energy performance at the very initial stages of design. 'Zero Carbon Ready' by design means making spatial decisions on layout and orientation of buildings at the outset to maximise the passive design benefits ('free heat') of a site and avoids leaving this to technical choices and assessment at the Building Regulation stage, by which time the opportunity may have been lost. Applicants are directed to the Net-Zero Toolkit created by Cotswold District Council and two partner councils, WODC and Forest of Dean District Council. The toolkit is available as a resource for private and public sector organisations to use and adopt.

5.62 Its Clause B incentivises all schemes, no matter what their intended use or size other than householder extensions, to use the Passivhaus Planning Package (PHPP) or equivalent design methodology for all buildings. It is acknowledged however that it may not be feasible to do so on some sites or schemes for practical reasons e.g. orientation, topography, shading or cost reasons which should be explained in the Energy Statement.

5.63 In respect of scheme viability, any extra-over cost of delivering 'zero carbon ready' buildings (now less than 5%) will diminish to zero well within the period of this Plan, as per both Government Regulatory Impact Assessments and research by the Passivhaus Trust. The recent NFDC Draft Planning for Climate Change Supplementary Planning Document suggests a 2-6% increase in build costs and further states that UK home buyers are willing to pay a green premium. The principal focus of this policy is to ensure that expensive and unnecessary retrofit costs are not passed down to building occupiers in the future, particularly in an area which has relatively high property value to income ratios. Scheme viability will not therefore be acceptable as a reason for not applying an appropriate design for performance methodology. The compliance outputs of SBEM or other Building Regulations compliance tools are not suitable for energy forecasting estimates.

5.64 The policy acknowledges that there may sometimes be a trade-off between its objectives and local design policy. Although meeting these objectives ought not to compromise a scheme fitting in with the character of a local area, on occasions this may be the case. It therefore allows for some degree of flexibility in meeting the Ringwood Design Code and Design Guidance issued by both Planning Authorities, especially in terms of prevalent building orientation and density.

5.65 Proposals seeking to apply the PHPP must also be able to demonstrate that the Passivhaus standard can be achieved. Prior to commencement a 'pre-construction compliance check' to be completed by a Passivhaus Designer accredited by the Passive House Institute (PHI) will be required and secured by condition. Upon completion a Quality Approved Passivhaus certificate for each building will be required prior to occupation, again secured by condition.

5.66 Where a developer cannot or chooses not to use the Passivhaus or equivalent design for performance methodology clause C will apply.

Guarantees for facilities related to energy generation and management should always be provided to the occupant.

5.67 In the absence of guidance covering whole life carbon assessment, Clause D requires major development proposals (i.e. those the NPPF defines as such, currently being 10 or more homes) to be accompanied by a Whole Life Carbon Emissions Assessment, the RICS methodology is preferred⁴. The assessment will enable the design team to understand and respond to the lifetime consequences of their design decisions and to design for adaptability, longevity and disassembly; contributing to resource efficiency (Clause A) and contributing to the ‘circular economy’⁵. This requirement will be added to the Local Validation Checklists for outline and full planning applications applying to proposals in the Ringwood Neighbourhood Plan area until such a time that there is a district-wide requirement.

5.68 Clause E requires an Energy Statement to be submitted to cover the following:

- an assessment of the proposal to minimise regulated and unregulated emissions, the embodied emissions and the emissions associated with maintenance, repair and replacement of the new building(s), as well as its dismantling, demolition and eventual material disposal
- a calculation of the energy use intensity and carbon emissions covered by the Future Homes Standard and Building Regulations and, separately, the energy demand and carbon emissions from

any other part of the development that are not covered by the Future Homes Standard or Building Regulations

- the proposal to reduce carbon emissions beyond the Future Homes Standard and Building Regulations through the energy efficient design of the site, buildings and services
- the proposal to further reduce carbon emissions through the use of zero or low-emission decentralised energy where feasible
- the proposal to further reduce carbon emissions by maximising opportunities to produce and use renewable energy on-site, utilising storage technologies where appropriate
- the proposal for a demand-side response, specifically through installation of smart meters, minimising peak energy demand and promoting short-term energy storage
- an analysis of the expected cost to occupants associated with the proposed energy strategy

5.69 Every new build or redevelopment project in Ringwood provides an opportunity to make a difference and a contribution towards meeting our national climate change targets for 2050. This new information requirement need not be an unreasonable expectation of even the smallest schemes for new buildings.

⁴ <https://www.rics.org/uk/upholding-professional-standards/sector-standards/building-surveying/whole-life-carbon-assessment-for-the-built-environment/>

⁵ https://www.london.gov.uk/sites/default/files/design_for_a_circular_economy_web.pdf

Net Zero Operational Carbon

Ten key requirements for new buildings

By 2030 all new buildings must operate at net zero to meet our climate change targets. This means that by 2025 all new buildings will need to be designed to meet these targets. This page sets out the approach to operational carbon that will be necessary to deliver zero carbon buildings. For more information about any of these requirements and how to meet them, please refer to the: UKGBC - Net Zero Carbon Buildings Framework; BBP - Design for Performance initiative; RIBA - 2030 Climate Challenge; GH A - Net Zero Housing Project Map; CIBSE - Climate Action Plan; and, LETI - Climate Emergency Design Guide.

Low energy use

- 1** Total Energy Use Intensity (EUI) - Energy use measured at the meter should be equal to or less than:

 - **35 kWh/m²/yr** (GIA) for residential¹

For non-domestic buildings a minimum DEC B (40) rating should be achieved and/or an EUI equal to or less than:

 - **65 kWh/m²/yr** (GIA) for schools¹
 - **70 kWh/m²/yr** (NLA) or **55 kWh/m²/yr** (GIA) for commercial offices^{1,2}

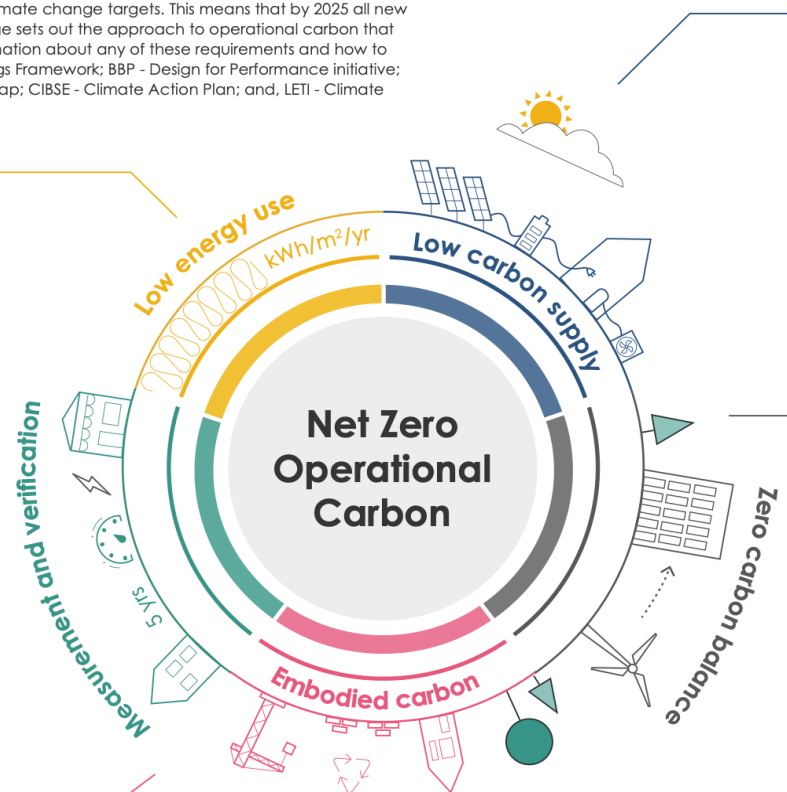
- 2** Building fabric is very important therefore space heating demand should be less than **15 kWh/m²/yr** for all building types.

Measurement and verification

- 3** Annual energy use and renewable energy generation on-site must be reported and independently verified in-use each year for the first 5 years. This can be done on an aggregated and anonymised basis for residential buildings.

Reducing construction impacts

- 4** Embodied carbon should be assessed, reduced and verified post-construction.³



Low carbon energy supply

- 5** Heating and hot water should not be generated using fossil fuels.
- 6** The average annual carbon content of the heat supplied (gCO₂/kWh) should be reported.
- 7** On-site renewable electricity should be maximised.
- 8** Energy demand response and storage measures should be incorporated and the building annual peak energy demand should be reported.

Zero carbon balance

- 9** A carbon balance calculation (on an annual basis) should be undertaken and it should be demonstrated that the building achieves a net zero carbon balance.
- 10** Any energy use not met by on-site renewables should be met by an investment into additional renewable energy capacity off-site OR a minimum 15 year renewable energy power purchase agreement (PPA). A green tariff is not robust enough and does not provide 'additional' renewables.

Notes:

Note 1 – Energy use intensity (EUI) targets
The above targets include all energy uses in the building (regulated and unregulated) as measured at the meter and exclude on-site generation. They have been derived from: predicted energy use modelling for best practice; a review of the best performing buildings in the UK; and a preliminary assessment of the renewable energy supply for UK buildings. They are likely to be revised as more knowledge is available in these three fields. As heating and hot water is not generated by fossil fuels, this assumes an all electric building until other zero carbon fuels exist. [kWh targets are the same as kWh_{low-carbon}]. Once other zero carbon heating fuels are available this metric will be adapted.

Note 2 – Commercial offices
With a typical net to gross ratio, 70 kWh/m² NLA/yr is equivalent to 55 kWh/m² GIA/yr. Building owners and developers are recommended to target a base building rating of 6 stars using the BBP's Design for Performance process based on NABERS.

Note 3 – Whole life carbon
It is recognised that operational emissions represent only one aspect of net zero carbon in new buildings. Reducing whole life carbon is crucial and will be covered in separate guidance.

Note 4 – Adaptation to climate change
Net zero carbon buildings should also be adapted to climate change. It is essential that the risk of overheating is managed and that cooling is minimised.

Developed in collaboration with:



Developed with the support of:



Policy R11: Encouraging Active and Healthy Travel

A. The Neighbourhood Plan Policy Map identifies the existing Sustainable Travel Network and opportunities for improvements, as shown on the Active Travel Policy Map, for the purpose of prioritising active and healthy travel.

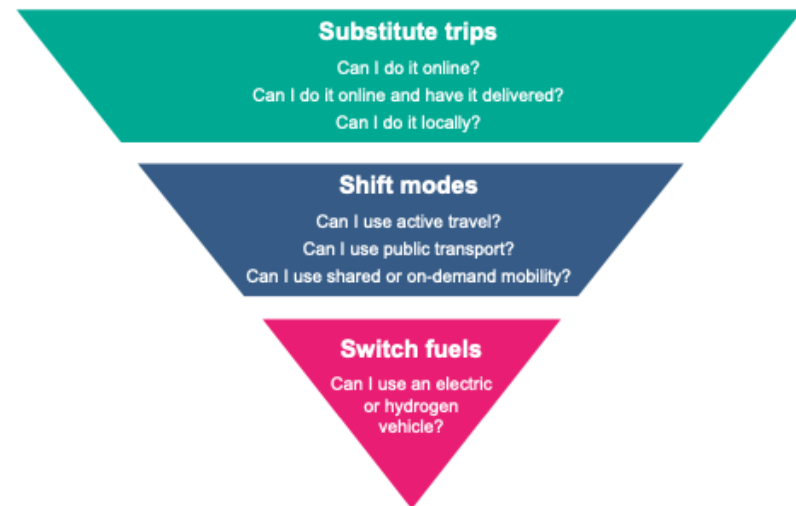
B. Development proposals on land that lies within or adjacent to the Network will be required, where practical, to provide opportunities for a more joined-up Network of walking and cycling routes to the town centre, local schools and community facilities and accessible green space by virtue of their layout, means of access and landscape treatment.

C. Proposals for major development (10 dwellings or above) should adopt the Sustainable Accessibility and Mobility Framework, as illustrated, and demonstrate how they have, in the following priority order:

- (i) sought to minimise the need to travel beyond the parish;**
- (ii) for longer trips, sought to encourage and enable the use of active, public and shared forms of transport; and,**
- (iii) for trips that must be made by car, sought to encourage and enable the use of zero emission vehicles.**

5.70 This policy embraces the principles of the Sustainable Accessibility and Mobility (SAM) Framework advocated in the Net Zero Transport report published by the Royal Town Planning Institute in 2021 ([Link](#)). The Framework adopts a place-based approach to net zero transport by focusing on solutions that create better places and healthier, happier, more resilient communities. It fits well with Hampshire County Council’s draft Local Transport Plan 4 (LTP4) and the emerging New Forest Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plans (LCWIP) which will encourage more local journeys to be undertaken on foot and by bike.

5.71 The SAM Framework objectives are critical to good planning, linking the imperative to reduce transport emissions with wider objectives related to decarbonisation, housing growth and nature recovery. This hierarchical approach (shown below) calls for measures that first focus on the role of place in reducing trips, before considering how to increase the proportion of the remaining trips that are taken by active, public and shared forms of transport.



5.72 The layout design of new development must also apply Manual for Streets best practice principles to create a permeable network of streets and spaces that support connections to local services and facilities in the Parish based on the principle of a ‘20 Minute Neighbourhood’ while also enabling residents to access green space to meet the requirements of Natural England’s Accessible Greenspace Standard (ANGSt). The overall aim being to support the physical and mental well-being of our community. For the avoidance of doubt, the network will not support or encourage access to internationally significant nature conservation sites.

5.73 The policy also maps a network of walking and cycling routes through the town to its boundaries where many routes continue to connect the town with the countryside and its neighbouring settlements. The aim of both is to raise awareness of the routes to encourage safe and convenient use, and to identify future opportunities to improve their connectivity, in line with NFDC Policy CCC2: Safe and Sustainable Travel and NFNPA Policies SP 54 'Transport Infrastructure' and SP55 'Access'.

5.74 An initial review of walking and cycling routes to schools was conducted as part of the Town Council's LCWIP work and is included in the evidence base.

6. IMPLEMENTATION AND MONITORING

6.1 The Neighbourhood Plan policies will be implemented through the determination of planning applications for development in the Parish by the local planning authorities.

Development Management

6.2 The planning authority will use a combination of the Local Plan and Neighbourhood Plan policies to inform and determine its planning application decisions. The Town Council is a statutory consultee on planning applications made in Ringwood and it will be made aware of any future planning applications or alterations to those applications by the planning authority. It will seek to ensure that the Neighbourhood Plan policies have been identified and applied correctly by applicants and by officers in their decision reports.

Local Infrastructure Improvements

6.3 Where opportunities arise through Section 106 agreements (or through the Community Infrastructure Levy) to secure financial contributions to invest in improving local infrastructure, the Town Council propose that the priorities for investment of its share of future Community Infrastructure Levy received from the local planning authority are applied to improvements to the public realm and to community infrastructure such as Castleman Trailway, Carvers Recreation Ground (including replacement facilities for grounds staff and equipment) and the eight Opportunity Areas highlighted in the Ringwood Strategic Master Plan in Appendix A

Other Non-Planning Matters

6.4 During the process of preparing the Neighbourhood Plan, there have been many ideas for improving or addressing current problems in the town that lie outside the scope of the land use planning system to control. The

Town Council has noted these issues and will take them forward through its day-to-day business and in partnership with the local community, the New Forest District Council and National Park Authority, Hampshire County Council and other relevant parties.

These include:

- Market Place/High Street Shared Space proposals
- Other Public Realm improvement projects
- Nature Recovery and Biodiversity Net Gain improvements
- Improvements to green the urban environment and street scene through tree planting and wildflower and bulb planting on public and private land including roadside verges
- Active travel improvements for non-car users, including walking and cycling routes, pedestrian and cycle friendly zones and Safe Routes to Schools, including Poulner Schools and other LCWIP type projects
- Community Led Housing

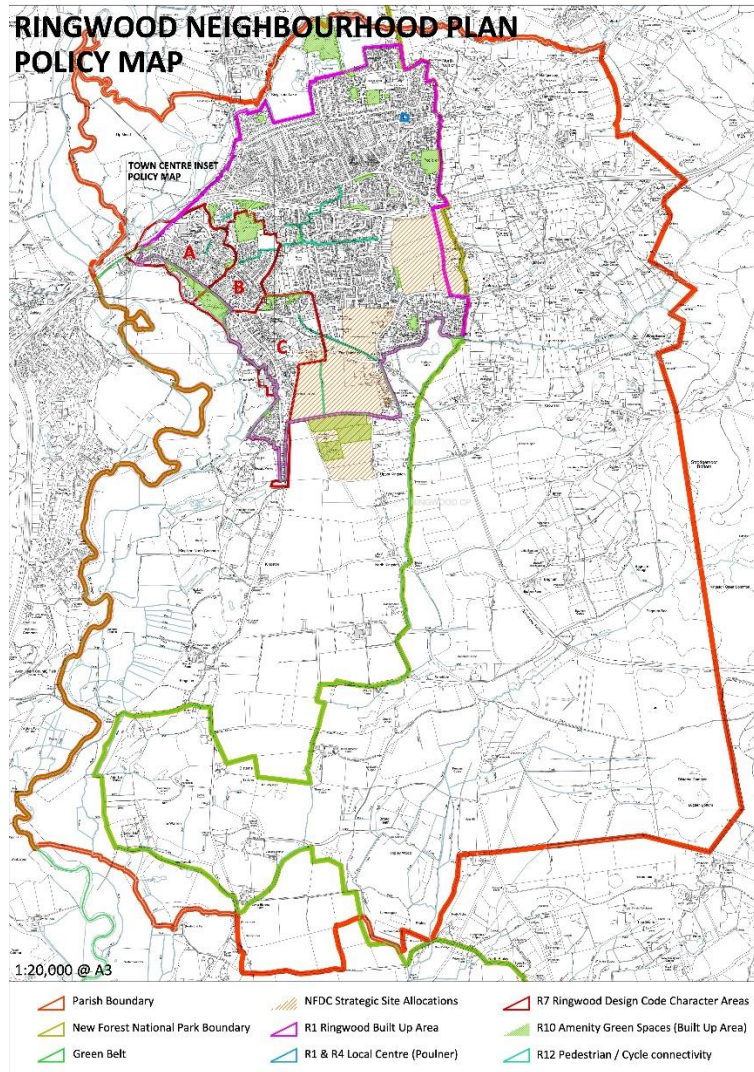
Monitoring and Reviewing the Plan

6.5 The Town Council will endeavour to monitor the effectiveness of the Neighbourhood Plan in informing decisions on planning applications and in informing the emerging Local Plans. It will consider a first review of the plan once that Local Plan has been adopted, responding to any policy prompts as necessary. Otherwise, in line with best practice, it will look to review the plan on a five yearly cycle so that its contents remain valid and up-to-date.

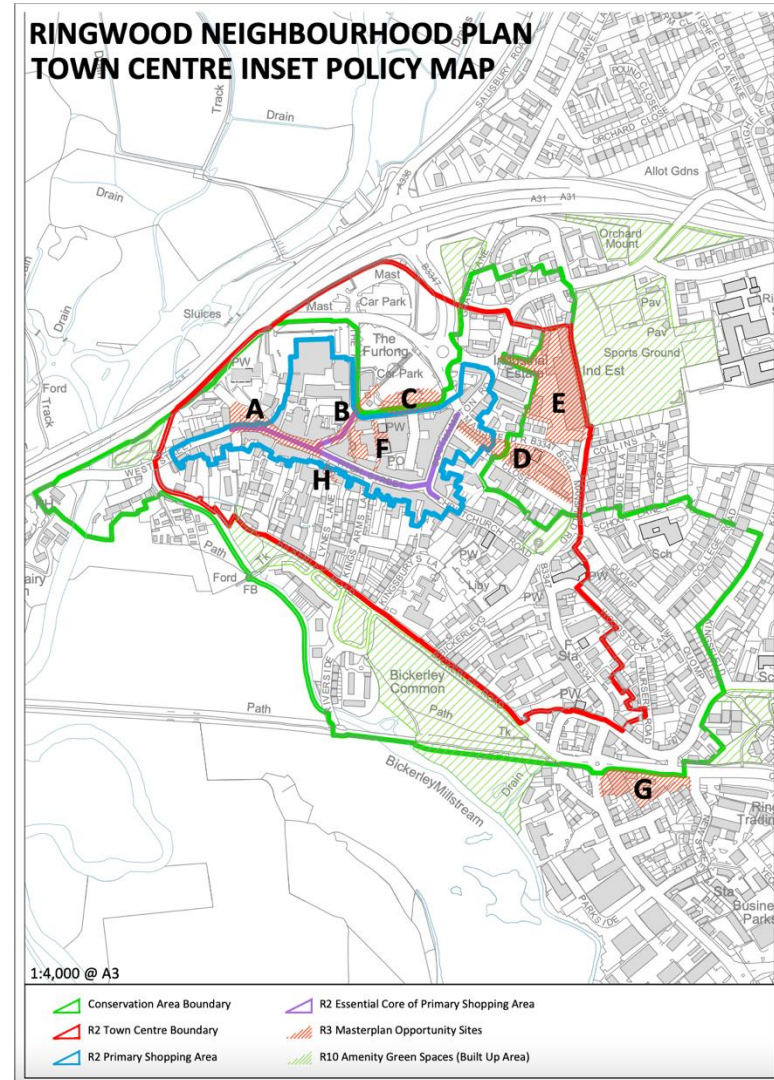
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POLICIES MAP and INSETS

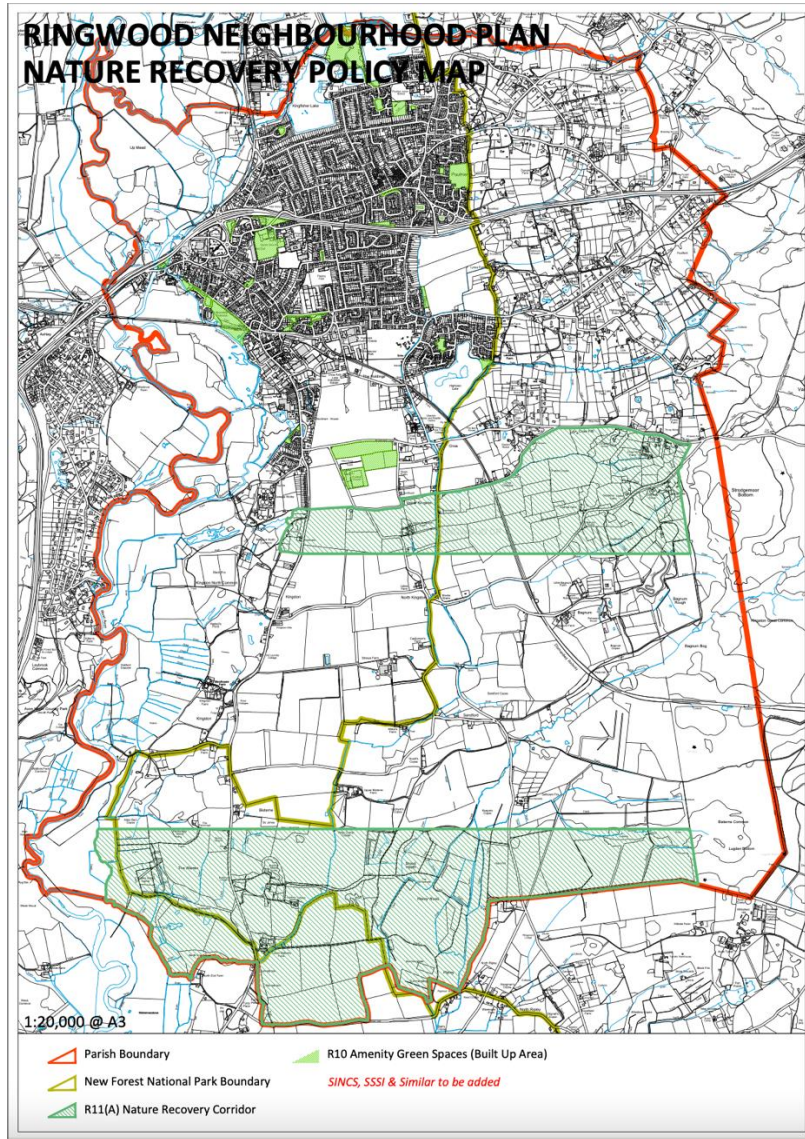
RINGWOOD NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN POLICY MAP



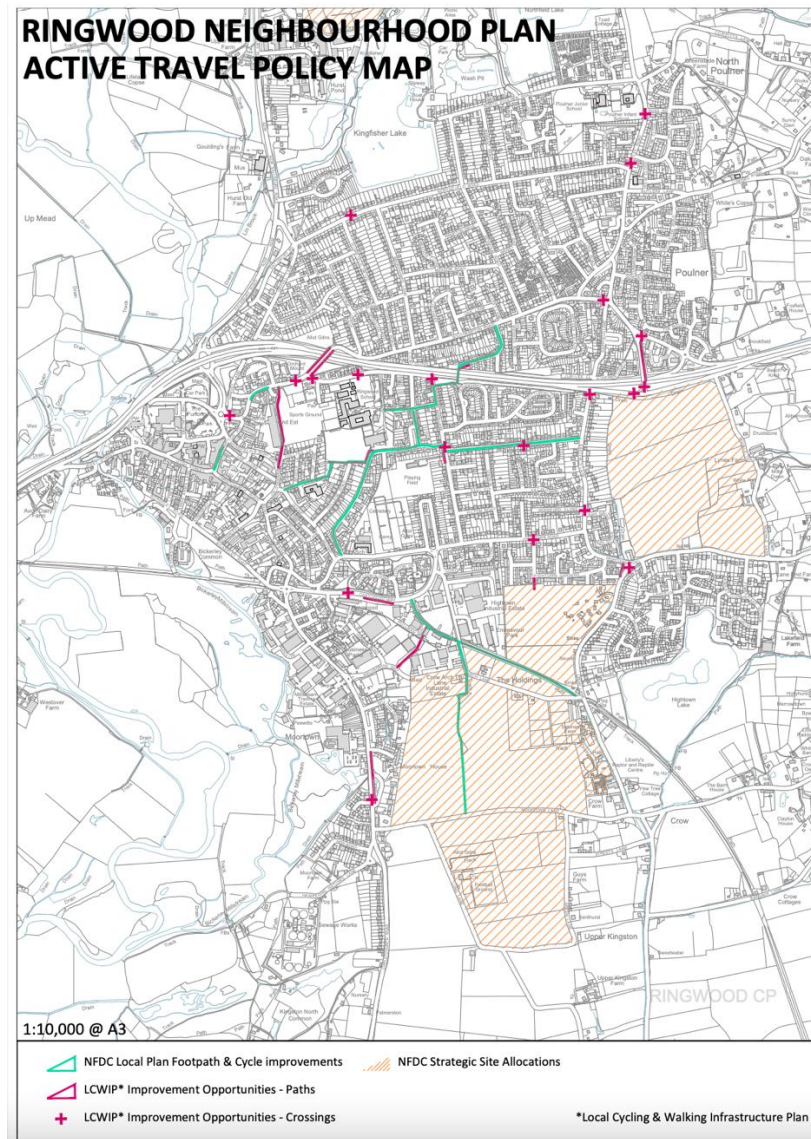
TOWN CENTRE INSET POLICY MAP



NATURE RECOVERY POLICY MAP



ACTIVE TRAVEL POLICY MAP



APPENDIX A: RINGWOOD STRATEGIC MASTERPLAN (POLICY R3) (Published separately due to document size)

APPENDIX B: RINGWOOD DESIGN GUIDANCE AND CODES (POLICY R7) (Published separately due to document size)

APPENDIX C: RINGWOOD LOCAL DISTINCTIVENESS SPD (POLICY R7) (Published separately due to document size)

APPENDIX D – ZERO CARBON BUILDINGS BACKGROUND NOTE (POLICY R10)

POLICY BACKGROUND

E.01 In respect of the direction of national policy, the UK Parliament declared an environment and climate emergency in May 2019. Both NFDC and the NFNPA have made similar declarations. The Climate Change Act 2008 is the basis for the UK’s approach to tackling and responding to climate change. It requires that emissions of carbon dioxide and other greenhouse gases are reduced and that climate change risks are prepared for. The Act also establishes the framework to deliver on these requirements and commits the UK government by law to reducing greenhouse gas emissions to ‘net zero’ by 2050.

E.02 The Energy White Paper published in December 2020 set out the government’s Vision and 10-point transition plan for how the UK will reach the UK target of ‘net zero’ carbon emissions by 2050. The White Paper confirms the government’s intention to ensure significant strides are made to improve building energy performance to meet this target. This means that by 2030 all new buildings must operate at ‘net zero’, the means by which this can be achieved is described in the diagram overleaf. This approach unequivocally focuses on the energy hierarchy and the role of post occupancy monitoring and verification to ensure buildings perform in the way they are designed.

⁶ Bath and North East Somerset Local Plan Partial Update Inspectors Report 13 Dec 2022 paragraphs 83 – 86. “84. *The WMS 2015 has clearly been overtaken by events and does not reflect Part L of the Building Regulations, the Future Homes Standard,*

E.03 The consultation on the ‘Future Buildings Standard’ announced in January 2021 aims to ‘radically improve’ the energy performance of new buildings, in respect of homes ensuring they are ‘zero carbon ready’ by 2025. This means having high levels of energy efficiency and fabric performance that produce 75 to 80 per cent lower carbon emissions than houses built to current standards, avoiding the need for any further retrofitting to the building fabric while at the same time reducing the occupant’s exposure to future high energy costs.

E.04 Fundamentally, this policy is intended to promote good design practice within the framework of National Planning Policy, it does not set energy standards. The Government has, however, confirmed in its response to the Future Homes Standard consultation that they do not intend to amend the Planning and Energy Act 2008 and as a result the Written Ministerial Statement of 2015 and the setting of energy efficiency standards at the Local Plan or Neighbourhood Plan level is permissible. This position has been found sound in a recent Local Plan examination⁶ and the policy considered to meet the Basic Conditions at a recent Neighbourhood Plan examination⁷.

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or the legally binding commitment to bring all greenhouse gas emissions to net zero by 2050.”

⁷ Ivers NP Decision Statement [Link](#) (South Bucks)

GLOSSARY

There are various technical terms used in this document and in the planning process. This glossary provides definitions to a range of such terms.

Affordable housing – Social rented, affordable rented and intermediate housing, provided to eligible households whose needs are not met by the market. Eligibility is determined with regard to local incomes and local house prices. Affordable housing should include provisions to remain at an affordable price for future eligible households or for the subsidy to be recycled for alternative affordable housing provision.

Article 4 direction – A direction restricting permitted development rights within a specified area. They are often used in conservation areas to provide protection for things like windows, doors, chimneys, etc.

Biodiversity – The degree of variation of life forms within a particular ecosystem. Biodiversity is a measure of the health of an ecosystem. Human activity generally tends to reduce biodiversity, so special measures often need to be taken to offset the impact of development on natural habitats.

Baseline biodiversity value – A snapshot of an area’s biodiversity which acts as a reference for comparing changes.

Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) – An approach to development and/or land management that aims to leave the natural environment in a measurably better state than it was beforehand.

Brownfield land – Land that has been previously developed.

Building for a Healthy Life – A technique for assessing the quality of housing proposals using 20 criteria including sustainability, urban design and social/community factors.

Carbon sequestration – A natural or artificial process by which carbon dioxide is removed from the atmosphere and held in solid or liquid form.

Change of use – A material change in the use of land or buildings that is of significance for planning purposes e.g. from retail to residential.

Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) – Allows local authorities to raise funds from developers undertaking new building projects in their areas. Money can be used to fund a wide range of infrastructure such as transport schemes, schools and leisure centres.

Conditions – Planning conditions are provisions attached to the granting of planning permission.

Conservation area – An area of special architectural or historic interest, the character and appearance of which is preserved and enhanced by local planning policies and guidance.

Cooler streets – Urban areas kept cooler in summer by designing in shade including trees that also cool the air naturally. So like walking through a wood rather than on a beach

Core strategy – A development plan document forming part of a local authority’s local plan, which sets out a vision and core policies for the development of an area.

Design and access statement – A report accompanying a planning application, which describes design principles of a development such as layout, townscape characteristics, scale, landscape design and appearance.

Development – Legal definition is “the carrying out of building, mining, engineering or other operations in, on, under or over land, and the making of any material change in the use of buildings or other land.”

Development management (previously known as development control) – The

process of administering and making decisions on different kinds of planning application.

Development plan – A document setting out the local planning authority’s policies and proposals for the development and use of land in the area.

Dormitory town – A place where people live but go to work in another town or city.

Extra-over cost - Additional sum of money allowed for items of work, normally used where the work has become slightly different from that agreed.

Evidence base –The evidence upon which a development plan is based, principally the background facts and statistics about an area, and the views of stakeholders.

First Homes – A scheme designed to help first time buyers onto the property ladder, by offering new homes at a discount of at least 30% against the market value and at a price no higher than £250,000.

Flood plain – An area of low-lying ground adjacent to a river, formed mainly of river sediments and prone to flooding.

Gentle Densification – increasing the density of a proposed housing development to meet housing needs,

whilst guarding against detracting from the character of the particular area.

Green belt – A designated band of land around urban areas, designed to contain urban sprawl.

Green infrastructure – Landscape, biodiversity, trees, allotments, parks, open spaces and other natural assets.

Green space – Those parts of an area which are occupied by natural, designed or agricultural landscape as opposed to built development; open space, parkland, woodland, sports fields, gardens, allotments, and the like.

Housing associations – Not-for-profit organisations providing homes mainly to those in housing need.

Independent examination – An examination of a proposed neighbourhood plan, carried out by an independent person, set up to consider whether a neighbourhood plan meets the basic conditions required.

Infrastructure – Basic services necessary for development to take place e.g. roads, electricity, water, education and health facilities.

Listed buildings – Any building or structure which is included in the statutory list of

buildings of special architectural or historic interest.

Local authority – The administrative body that governs local services such as education, planning and social services.

Local list – A list produced by a local authority to identify buildings and structures of special local interest which are not included in the statutory list of listed buildings.

Local plan - The name for the collection of documents prepared by a local planning authority for the use and development of land and for changes to the transport system. Can contain documents such as development plans and statements of community involvement.

Local planning authority – Local government body responsible for formulating planning policies and controlling development; a district council, metropolitan council, a county council, a unitary authority or national park authority.

Local transport plan – Plans that set out a local authority’s policies on transport on a five yearly basis.

Material considerations – Factors which are relevant in the making of planning decisions, such as sustainability, impact on residential amenity, design and traffic impacts.

Mixed use – The development of a single building or site with two or more complementary uses.

National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) – The government policy document adopted in March 2012 (and last updated December 2023) intended to make national planning policy and guidance less complex and more accessible. The National Planning Policy Framework introduces a presumption in favour of sustainable development. It gives five guiding principles of sustainable development: living within the planet’s means; ensuring a strong, healthy and just society; achieving a sustainable economy; promoting good governance; and using sound science responsibly.

Neighbourhood area – The local area in which a neighbourhood plan or neighbourhood development order can be introduced.

Neighbourhood plan – A planning document created by a parish or town council, which sets out the vision for the neighbourhood area, and contains policies for the development and use of land in the area. Neighbourhood plans must be subjected to an independent examination to confirm that they meet legal requirements, and then to a local referendum. If approved by a majority vote of the local community, the

neighbourhood plan will then form part of the statutory development plan.

Net zero – A target of completely negating the amount of greenhouse gases produced by human activity, to be achieved by reducing emissions and implementing methods of absorbing carbon dioxide from the atmosphere.

Passivhaus – A standard for energy efficiency in a building designed to result in very low energy usage for heating and lighting.

Passive surveillance – Enhanced visibility when building properties, streets, transport hubs and retail settings to deter some offenders from committing crime.

Permitted development – Certain minor building works that don’t need planning permission e.g. a boundary wall below a certain height.

Policy – A concise statement of the principles that a particular kind of development proposal should satisfy in order to obtain planning permission.

Planning obligation – Planning obligation under Section 106 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990, secured by a local planning authority through negotiations with a developer to offset the public cost of permitting a development

proposal. Sometimes developers can self-impose obligations to pre-empt objections to planning permission being granted. They cover things like highway improvements or open space provision. See also CIL.

Planning permission – Formal approval granted by a council allowing a proposed development to proceed.

PV panels – Photovoltaic panels, often referred to as solar panels, which produce electricity from sunlight.

Public open space – Open space to which the public has free access.

Public realm – Areas of space usually in town and city centres where the public can circulate freely, including streets, parks and public squares.

Qualifying body – Either a parish/town council or neighbourhood forum, which can initiate the process of neighbourhood planning.

Referendum – A vote by which the eligible population of an electoral area may decide on a matter of public policy. Neighbourhood plans and neighbourhood development orders are made by a referendum of the eligible voters within a neighbourhood area.

Regeneration - Upgrading an area through social, physical and economic improvements.

Retail – The process of selling single or small numbers of items directly and in person to customers. The use category defined as Class A1 in the Town and Country Planning (Use Classes) Order 1987.

Retrofit – To add (a component or accessory) to something that did not have it when manufactured.

Rural – Areas of land which are generally not urbanised; usually with low population densities and a high proportion of land devoted to agriculture.

Section 106 – see Planning obligation.

Sequential test – A principle for making a planning decision based on developing certain sites or types of land before others, for example, developing brownfield land before greenfield sites, or developing sites within town centres before sites outside town centres.

SSSI - Site of special scientific interest – A protected area designated as being of special interest by virtue of its flora, fauna, geological or geomorphological features. SSSIs are designated under the Wildlife and Countryside

Act 1981 by the official nature conservation body for the particular part of the UK in question.

Spatial planning – A wider view of planning, which involves co-ordination and integration across different sectors such as transport and industry. Brings together all policies and programmes which have an impact on the environment in which you work, live or play.

Strategic policy – A policy that is essential for the delivery of a strategy, for example, the overall scale and distribution of housing and employment in an area.

Supplementary planning document – Provides detailed thematic or site-specific guidance explaining or supporting the policies in the local plan.

Sustainable Accessibility & Mobility (SAM) Framework – A tool to help planners and designers prioritise interventions in the following order: (i) Substitute Trips: Replace the need to travel beyond your community'; (ii) Shift Modes: For longer trips, use active public and shared forms of transport; and (iii) Switch Fuels: For trips that must be made by car, ensure the vehicle is zero emission.

Sustainable development – An approach to development that aims to allow economic growth without damaging the environment

or natural resources. Development that “meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs”.

Townscape – The pattern and form of urban development; the configuration of built forms, streets and spaces.

Tenure – The terms and conditions under which land or property is held or occupied, e.g. five year leasehold, freehold owner occupation, etc.

Urban – Having the characteristics of a town or a city; an area dominated by built development.

Use class – The legally defined category into which the use of a building or land falls (see Use classes order).

Use classes order – The Town and Country Planning (Use Classes) Order 1987 (as amended) is the statutory instrument that defines the categories of use of buildings or land for the purposes of planning legislation. Planning permission must be obtained to change the use of a building or land to another class.

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