

Highcliffe District Centre

Introduction

5.21 Highcliffe-on-Sea is a coastal town located to the east of Christchurch. It is one of a number of towns that merge to form a conurbation along the south coast of Dorset. Highcliffe has seen considerable development over the last 30 years, which has included some larger blocks of flats and high density infill development which has detracted from the character of the area. Consideration will be given to developing policies and design guidance in future Development Plan Documents which protect the character of Highcliffe.

5.22 Highcliffe district centre is well located for development on the A337, which is the main coastal road giving access to Christchurch and Bournemouth as well as the passing trade driving along the coast. The town is also served by Hinton Admiral Railway Station which is located approximately one mile to the north of the centre and has an hourly service. The main shopping area of Highcliffe is concentrated along Lymington Road.

Key Facts

Trading

- Highcliffe has 120 shop units.
- There is a choice of convenience outlets including Tesco Express, The Co-operative Food, newsagents, greengrocer and butcher.
- Highcliffe has below the national average of comparison (40%) and convenience (7.5%) units
- whilst services and miscellaneous uses are much higher than the national average at 47.5%.
- The range of comparison retail is relatively good for a small centre.
- The quality and proportion of 'national multiples' is poor due to their low representation.
- The number of vacant units (5%) is below the national average.

Environment

- The A337 Lymington Road severs Highcliffe district centre into two areas. The route is heavily trafficked, and can suffer congestion during peak rush hours.
- The main public car park is a large surface car park located behind Co-op very close to the

- centre of the shopping core and providing easy access on foot to the whole centre
- The quality of the streetscape is low.
- The main shopping area along the busy A337 creates pedestrian - vehicular conflict.
- Highcliffe is surrounded by a number of areas afforded environmental protection. To the north and east there are Sites of Nature Conservation Interest and to the south the coastal area is designated a Site of Special Scientific Interest.

Strategic Requirements

- Highcliffe district centre can accommodate in the region of 500sqm additional non food retail floorspace to 2031. (Christchurch and East Dorset Retail Update 2012)
- There is no need for further supermarket floorspace in Highcliffe to 2031. (Christchurch and East Dorset Retail Update 2012)
- There is a lack of sports/recreation facilities to accommodate the needs of children and young people. (Open Space Audit, 2007)
- The Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment identified potential for 291 new dwellings for Highcliffe and North Highcliffe/Walkford by 2028 (Christchurch Strategic Housing land Availability Assessment. (2011)
- There is likely to be an increase in demand for services and facilities for the elderly, such as community meeting places, medical and social care.

Retail Provision

5.23 The main shopping area of Highcliffe is concentrated along Lymington Road and provides for convenience shopping (The Co-operative Food, Tesco Express, butchers, greengrocers and an off licence), small independent shops covering a variety of goods, public houses, restaurants, takeaways and other services. There are 120 outlets in the centre, 48 of which are comparison. The centre's Primary Shopping Frontage runs along the Lymington Road from the Globe Inn to the junction of Waterford Road to the east. The centre is well used and there are few vacant units.

5.24 Highcliffe does not require additional supermarket floorspace during the period to 2031. In the Borough as a whole there is a requirement for additional comparison retail floorspace. There is a need for Highcliffe to provide in the region of 500sqm additional comparison retail floorspace in contributing to the overall borough requirement. This is significantly less than Christchurch town centre which has far more capacity for retail development.

Sports, Leisure and Recreation Facilities

5.25 Except for the nearby Recreation Ground, there are no parks and open spaces within Highcliffe district centre, although the seafront is a short walk away. There are no real opportunities for the provision of additional open space in Highcliffe Centre but there is an opportunity to establish an area for recreation at Chewton Common as part of a project to reduce recreational pressure on the Dorset Heathlands. In Highcliffe as a whole there is a requirement for amenity green space, active sports space, space for children and young people, and allotments (2007 Open Space Audit).

5.26 Highcliffe has a limited selection of commercial, leisure, entertainment and cultural facilities, but this reflects the relatively small catchment population. There is relatively good access to leisure, entertainment and cultural facilities outside of the Borough, particularly in Bournemouth and Poole. Highcliffe district centre is reasonably well provided for in terms of restaurants and public houses which contributes to the vitality and viability of the centre.

Transport

5.27 Traffic congestion is also perceived to be a significant issue from traffic along the A337 Lyminster Road and this acts as a physical barrier to pedestrians. The Christchurch Parking, Access and Signage Strategy (2006) concludes that existing public car parking is sufficient for the centre generally to meet current and future demand.

Housing

5.28 There is potential for further residential development within Highcliffe, North Highcliffe/Walkford as identified in the Christchurch Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment and referred to in the Key Facts section above. The housing requirements for the Borough forms part of Policy KS3 of the Key Strategy Chapter which sets a housing target for the whole plan area.

Highcliffe District Centre Vision

Policy CH 4

Highcliffe District Centre Vision.

Highcliffe District Centre will continue to act as a thriving and busy centre for the local population and visitors. The centre will accommodate further comparison retail floorspace, in the region

of 500sqm (net) to 2028 with Christchurch Town Centre remaining the principal centre for retail development in the Borough. The shopping environment will be improved to provide a more pleasant townscape, public transport services will be enhanced, and facilities and services will continue to be located in this central location.

To achieve this vision:

1. Retail uses will be expanded and enhanced to promote the vitality and viability of the centre consistent with the Borough retail strategy. The strategy for Highcliffe will seek to enhance the niche retail offer to attract more visitors with unique, specialist shops.
2. Expansion of evening economy uses will be encouraged, especially in the designated secondary shopping cores. This will enhance the vitality of the centre, making it a more vibrant place in the afternoon and evening hours.
3. Community services in Highcliffe will be retained, supported and where possible enhanced to support the vitality and viability of the centre. The enhancement of facilities for older people such as community meeting places, medical and social care will be sought. Opportunities will also be pursued to provide further sports and recreation facilities to meet the needs of children and young people.
4. Better marked/signposted linkages between the Highcliffe beach front and the town centre will draw in more visitors to the centre that will benefit local trade.
5. The townscape quality of the centre will be improved: the objective is to secure a high quality environment that will give the centre a distinct character and enhance its sense of identity. This will be achieved by providing new street furniture and planting in an effort to create an attractive, welcoming and pedestrian friendly environment. The pedestrian-vehicular conflict, apparent on the A337 Lymington Road will be minimised by the introduction of appropriate traffic calming measures and provision of more frequent pedestrian crossings.
6. To minimise congestion and air pollution, sustainable transport infrastructure and services will be encouraged.
7. The Council will ensure that adequate parking levels are maintained within the centre to ensure its vitality and viability.

Delivery and Monitoring

5.29 Delivery of the vision for Highcliffe District Centre will involve the Council working closely

with landowners to bring forward appropriate developments. Townscape and transport infrastructure improvements will also involve working with Dorset County Council, transport providers, retailers and organisations such as the Chamber of Trade.

Highcliffe Primary and Secondary Shopping Frontages

5.30 The Primary Shopping Frontage is defined in Policy CH5 along Lymington Road where there will be a high proportion of retail uses in accordance with Policy CH6. Within the Secondary Shopping Frontage to the east of Waterford Road a greater diversity of uses will be permitted in accordance with Policy CH7.

Policy CH 5

Highcliffe Shopping Frontages.

Policy CH5 defines the Highcliffe District Centre Primary and Secondary Shopping Frontages.

Christchurch Shopping Frontage Policy

5.31 The main function of the Primary Shopping Frontage of Christchurch Town Centre, Bargates and Highcliffe is to provide an appropriate mix of retail units alongside other uses which contribute to the vitality and viability of the centres. Policy CH6 restricts the number of ground floor non retail units within the Primary Shopping Frontage to no more than 30% in order to maintain a strong retail presence. This approach has been appraised and is supported by the Christchurch and East Dorset Retail Study Update (2012).

Policy CH 6

Development in the Primary Shopping Frontages.

Within the Saxon Square and High Street Primary Core, and the primary frontages at Bargates and Highcliffe, planning permission for the change of use of existing ground floor retail premises (Class A1) to non - retail uses will be permitted provided that:

1. The proposed use is for a financial or professional service use (Class A2), or for a food

and drinks uses (Class A3), or for non residential institutions falling within Class D1 and leisure and entertainment uses falling within Class D2.

2. Non - retail uses (other than Class A1) will not cumulatively amount to more than 30% of all ground floor units in each of the identified areas.
3. The proposal will not result in more than three continuous frontages in non retail use (other than Class A1).
4. A shop front appearance will be retained.

Secondary Shopping Frontage Policy

5.32 The Secondary Shopping Frontage of Bargates, Wick Lane, Church Street, Castle Street, Barrack Road, Purewell and Highcliffe are considered from a land use and environmental point of view to have greater potential for an increased diversity of uses that contribute to the overall vitality and viability of the retail centres. Within the Secondary Shopping frontages a greater variety of ground floor uses will be permitted in accordance with Policy CH7.

Policy CH 7

Development in the Secondary Shopping Frontages.

Proposals for the change of use of existing non residential premises located within the secondary frontages at Bargates, Wick Lane, Church Street, Castle Street, Barrack Road and Purewell and Highcliffe as identified on the proposals map will be permitted provided that the following criteria are satisfied:

1. The proposed use is for a financial or professional service use (Class A2), or a food and drink use (Class A3), drinking establishments (Class A4), hot food take-aways (Class A5), hotels (Class C1), or non - residential institutions falling within Class D1 and leisure and entertainment uses falling within Class D2, and
2. The amenities of the local residents are not adversely affected by noise or disturbance, or by loss of light and privacy.

